LifeVenture.me iPad app - User's Manual

Summary

This is the User's Manual for the LifeVenture.me Application, an iPad app designed to help users to recall, record, relive, and relay to others the wisdom acquired through their life experiences. Google has done a great job organizing the world's information and making it findable. LifeVenture.me will make the wisdom of the world's citizens searchable and actionable.

The LifeVenture.me app is a native iOS application, capable to use the full capabilities of the iPad hardware. The app supports multiple users; provides multimedia capture from inside the app; supports multiple languages; has a built-in intelligent assistant; and can safely upload data to remote servers.

The app guides a user through a process of self-discovery and remembrance of her life story. The app then structures the user's life into simple, logical “buckets” of related items: the People in her life; the Places she's been to; the Events that have defined her; the Stories she'd like to tell; photos and videos (Media) about her life; and the Notes she wants to keep and pass on.

The data collected by the app can be uploaded to the LifeVenture.me Community Server for sharing with others. This server will provides many additional features (listed below), including interfaces to genealogy and social networking sites.

The screenshots below include information for a fictitious Narrator named “Peter Albert Pan.” The full test data set is available in Appendix - Sample Narrator Data below.

The LifeVenture.me app is available for licensing, and can be customized with your organization's UI.

Version 08 of 12/17/2012.

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Background

The LifeVenture.me app allows the collection of both living history and genealogical information about individuals, labeled “Narrators”. A single physical iPad can hold the records for one or multiple Narrators.

Our biggest competitor is a blank sheet of paper, where an individual does not know where to start to gather, collect, organize, and eventually share her life story. LifeVenture.me solves that problem.

The app is designed to store and manage the information of multiple Narrators in a single iPad. The app can be used under 03 different Usage Modes, described in the table below.

Usage Mode	Description
Narrator	An individual that records her own life story.
Interviewer	An individual (“Interviewer”) that records somebody else's (“Narrator”) life story.
Reader	An individual that reads (in the future also comment / edit) a Narrator's life story.

Table 1: Usage Modes for App.

The Narrator will answer the app's questions over a series of encounters. There is no expectation that a Narrator will enter her entire life story into the app in one session.

Simple

The layout of the app is identical to a paper-based form, something all users are familiar with. Overall, the app's interface is purposefully designed to be as familiar to the user as possible.

The app encourages the user to fill out an Initial Questionnaire. Everybody is used to going to a new doctor, for example, and filling out a long form with all your previous health data. The Initial Questionnaire is modeled on the same mental analogy.

Structured

The app is very structured and helps guide the user through a series of logical, sequential steps that serve to extract the most possible information from the user.

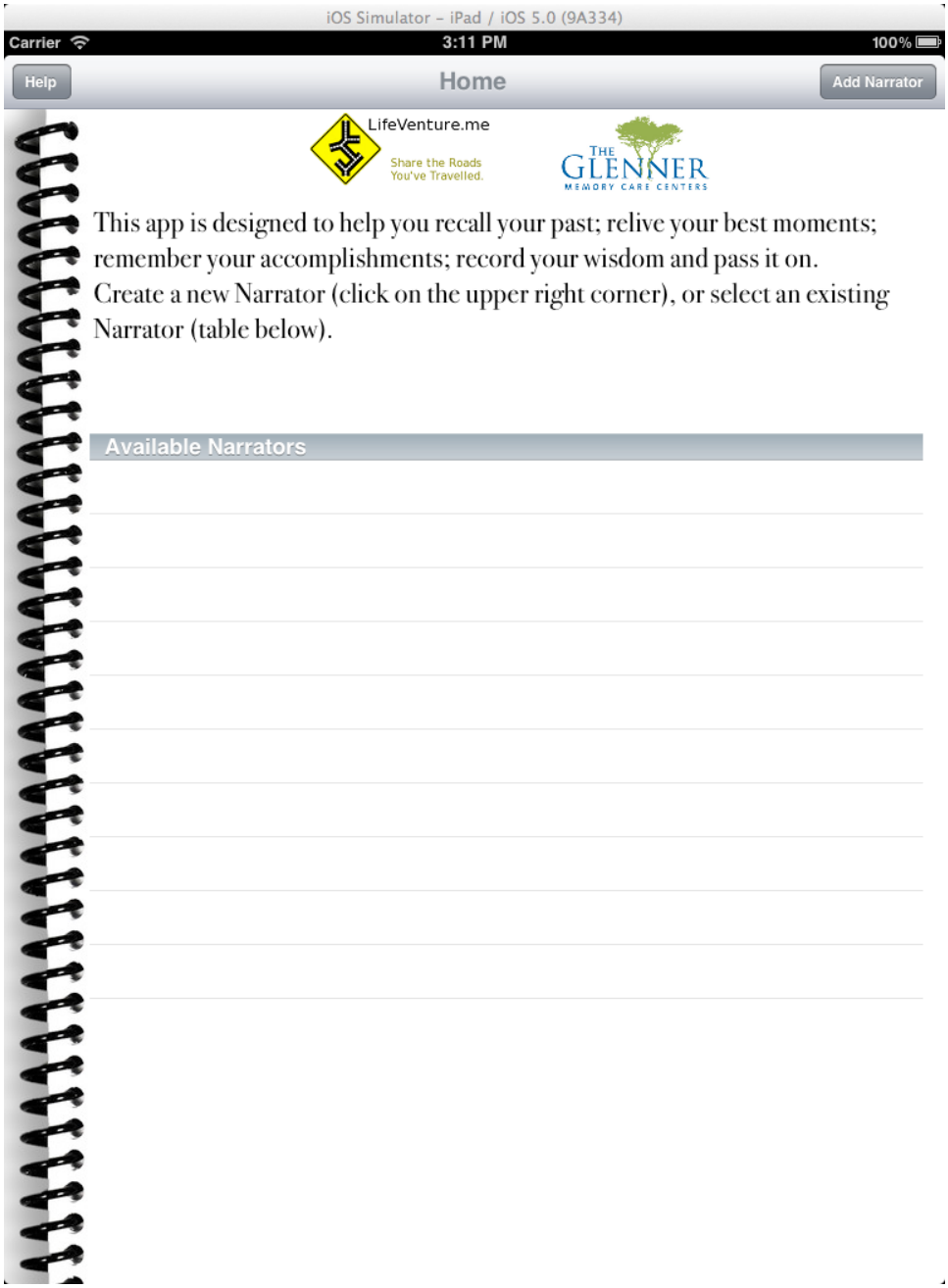
The app allows the user to write her story in waves. Once the app collects the basic information every subsequent session with the app allows the user to go deeper on specific stories, events, people, etc.

Intelligent

The app makes extensive use of both a Rules Engine as well as proprietary taxonomies to lower the cognitive load of using the app.

Main Screen

Once the user launches the app she is presented with the main screen, below. Here the user can:
a.) create a new Narrator's profile; or
b.) select an existing Narrator's profile and edit it


iOS Simulator – iPad / iOS 5.0 (9A334)
Carrier
3:11 PM
100%
Help
Home
Add Narrator
LifeVenture.me
Share the Roads You've Travelled.
THE GLENNER MEMORY CARE CENTERS
This app is designed to help you recall your past; relive your best moments; remember your accomplishments; record your wisdom and pass it on.
Create a new Narrator (click on the upper right corner), or select an existing Narrator (table below).
Available Narrators

The first step in using the app is to create a new Narrator's profile. Click the upper right corner button.

Add Narrator

The Initial Questionnaire screen is designed to collect basic demographic information about the Narrator.

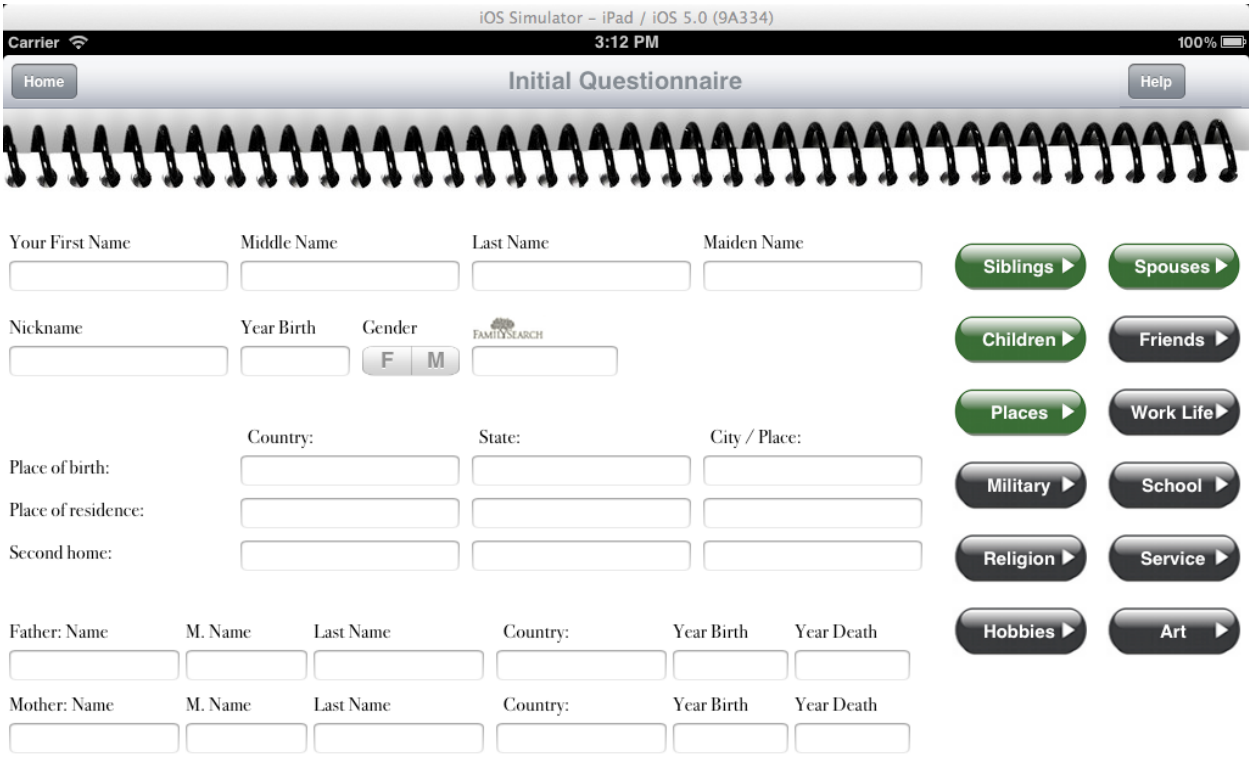


Illustration 1: Blank Initial Questionnaire.

Please notice that the user can bypass the Initial Questionnaire all together and just go into adding People / Places / etc. on their own.

Our research indicates that many people who want to write their memoirs appreciate this “guided” approach.

Once the LifeVenture.me Community Server is up and running then multiple people will be able to collaborate in writing and editing a single Narrator's story.

Please notice the following items throughout the application.

Minimizing User Typing

The LifeVenture.me app is purposefully designed to minimize the number of keystrokes the user has to touch on an iPad.

Built-in Taxonomies

The LifeVenture.me App includes the following proprietary taxonomies:

Taxonomy	Details
Geography	Covers 250+ countries; 4,800+ provinces/states; and 02.9 million locations, each with Lat/Long values.
Historical, social events	Most relevant historical and social for these countries: Greece, Mexico, Spain, and USA. Covering the period 1850 to 2012.
Job classifications	Includes over 200 high-level job types.
Hobbies, Sports	Includes over 200 unique sports and hobbies.
Military Services, Ranks (USA)	All branches of the US military, and current ranks and insignias.
Family Relationships	Listing of family relationships, by gender, by side of the family.

Table 2: Taxonomies.

Tagging all Content

In many fields the app limits the user's choices to selecting from a list of pre-determined values.

Years / Dates

The user can select a year from a scroll list of years.

Illustration 2: Selecting Year of Birth.

This helps the app to ensure that the user can only enter numeric values within an acceptable range.

Pre-populated Country / State / City

The app is pre-loaded with the names (and geographic coordinates) of over two and a half million cities, towns and villages from every country around the world.

Technical Note
We have developed a proprietary geographical taxonomy. This helps us ensure that there are no spelling errors in the names of countries, states and cities. “Is that Mississippi or Mississipi?”

The user first selects a country of interest, below.

Illustration 3: Select Country Name.

Next, based on the country selected, the user can now select a list of states available for that country.

Illustration 4: Select State in Chosen Country.

Finally, based on the state and the country selected thus far, the user can choose the individual city, town or village of interest, below:

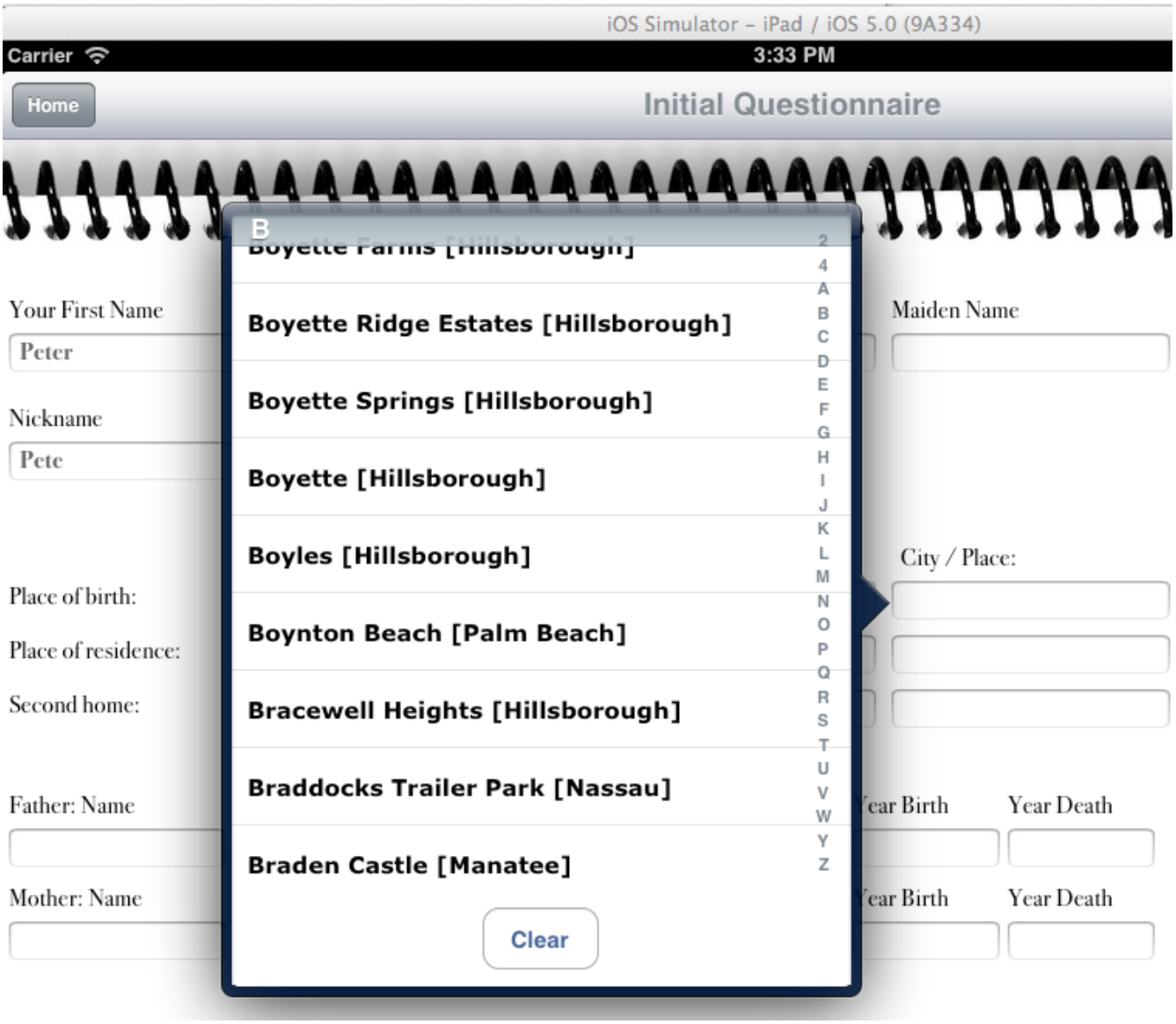


Illustration 5: Select a City / Town / Village.

For locations in the US please keep this in mind:
a.) The name of the county is included in square brackets (ie. “Boynton Beach [Palm Beach]”) refers to the city of Boynton Beach in Palm Beach county, in Florida.
b.) US military bases are listed under the following headings:

“Camp..”
“Naval Air..”
“U S Army..”

For locations outside the US please note that the name of both the state (or department or province) and the city are in the local language. Thus, “Munich” in the state of Bavaria in Germany is classified under “Munchen” and part of the “Freistaat Bayern”.

	Country:	State:	City / Place:
Place of birth:	United States	Florida	Boynton Beach [Palm Beach]
Place of residence:	Uzbekistan	Andijon Viloyati	Andijon Shahri
Second home:	Germany	Freistaat Bayern	Munchen

Illustration 6: Non-US State and City Names.

Once you finish entering all your personal information (and if you used the values listed in Appendix - Sample Narrator Data below) the screen may look like this:

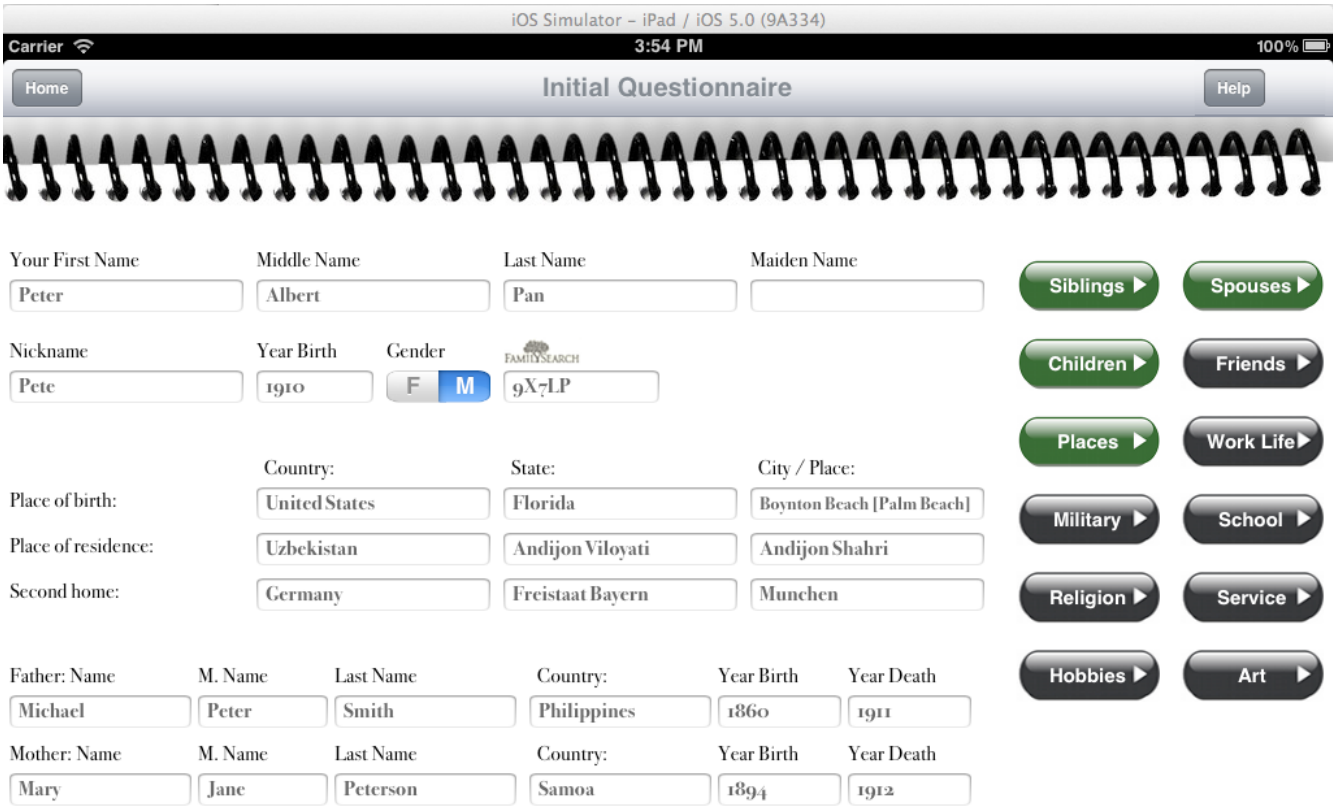


Illustration 7: Filled-out Initial Questionnaire.

Now the user proceeds to entering details about a few areas of his life.

Areas of Life

The app is designed to gently, but systematically help the Narrator to remember his life. Thus, we now proceed to ask questions about different areas of the Narrator's life.

The user can click on any of the button shown on the right side, and then proceed to fill out the questions in each section.

Illustration 8: Areas of Life.

Area of Life	Details about the Narrator's
Siblings	Sibling(s), if any (dead and alive).
Spouses	Current or past spouse(s), if any.
Children	Children, if any.
Friends	Friends.
Places Lived	Places (country / state / location) Narrator has lived in during her life.
Work History	Jobs performed by Narrator during her life.
Military	Military service, if any.
Education	Educational achievements.
Religion	Religious practices.
Community	Community involvement.
Hobbies	Hobbies and sports.
Art & Culture	Interest in artistic and cultural activities.

Table 3: Sections of Initial Questionnaire.

We want to encourage the user to answer as many questions as possible in order to have the best results possible later on. For that, the app uses a simple, common interface design in each of those 12 areas.

Please notice that each of the 12 screens below can be filled out with very few keystrokes, since most fields present the user with drop-down lists of options to select from.

Siblings

Illustration 9: List your Sibling(s).

Spouses

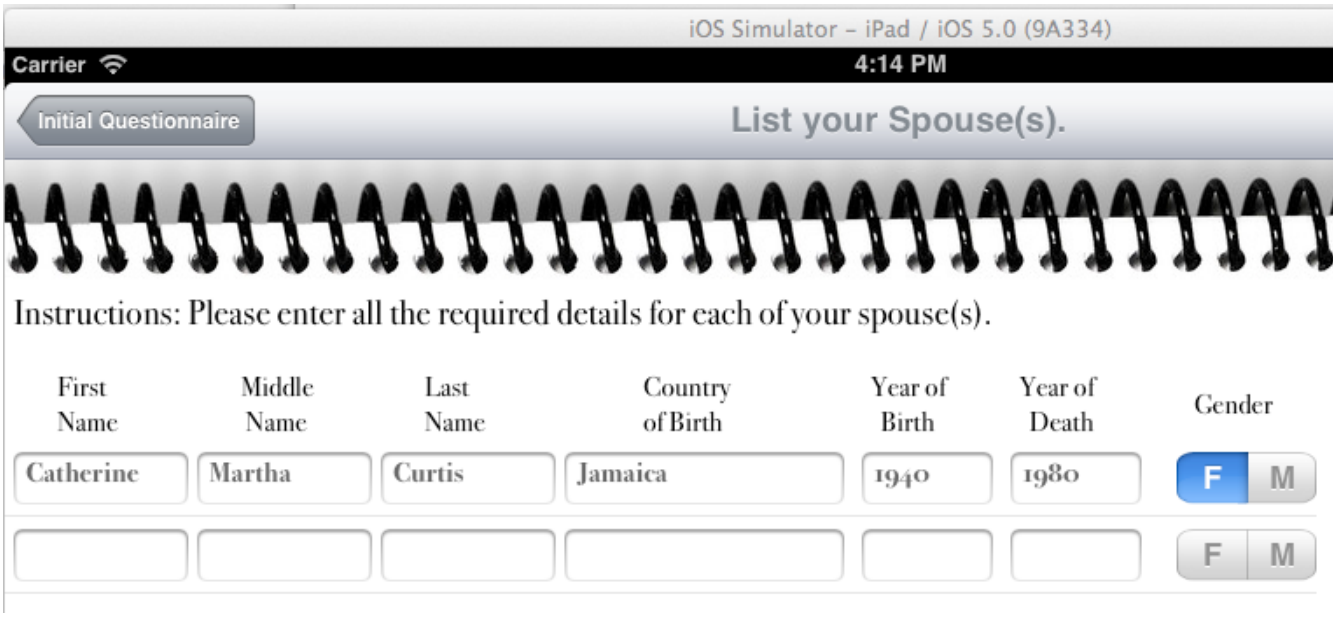


Illustration 10: List your Spouse(s).

Children

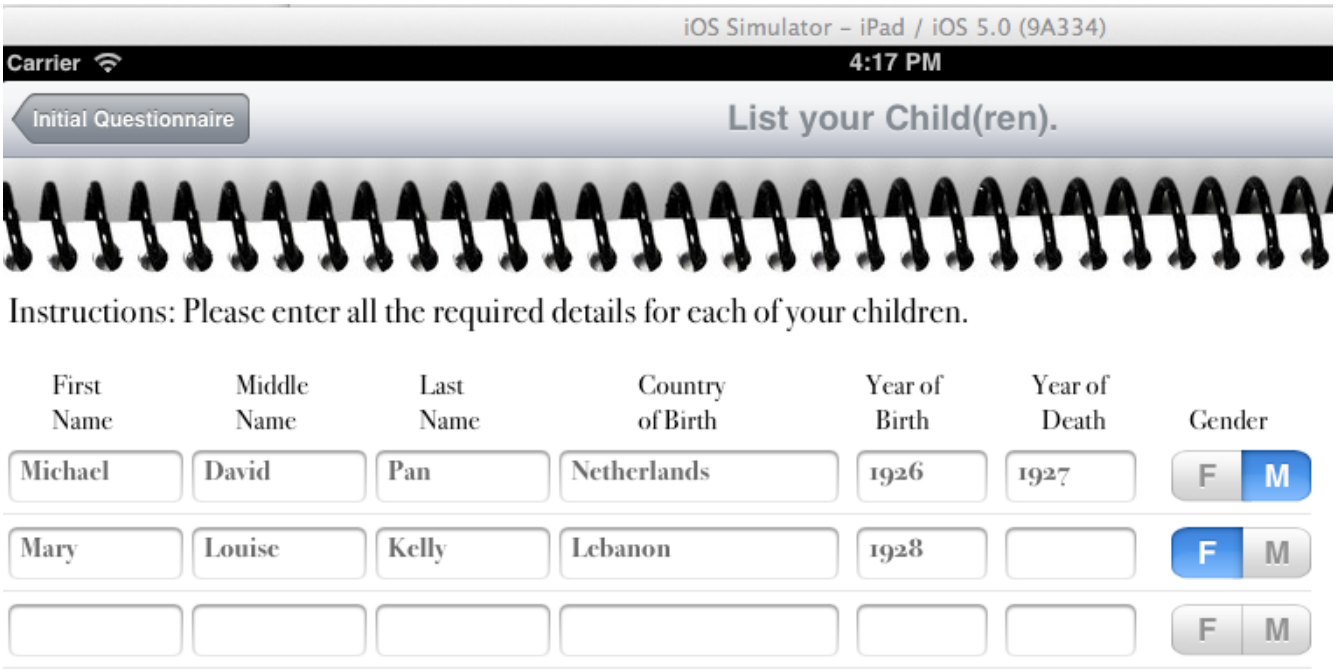


Illustration 11: List your Child(ren).

Friends

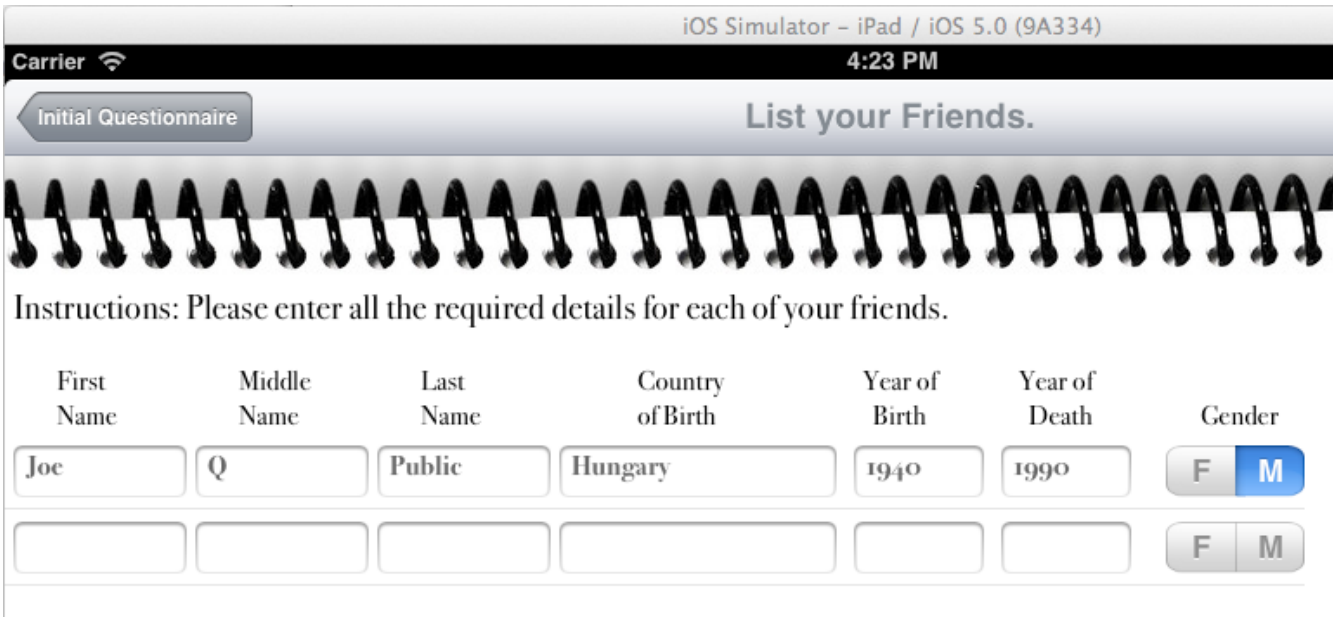


Illustration 12: List your Friends.

Places

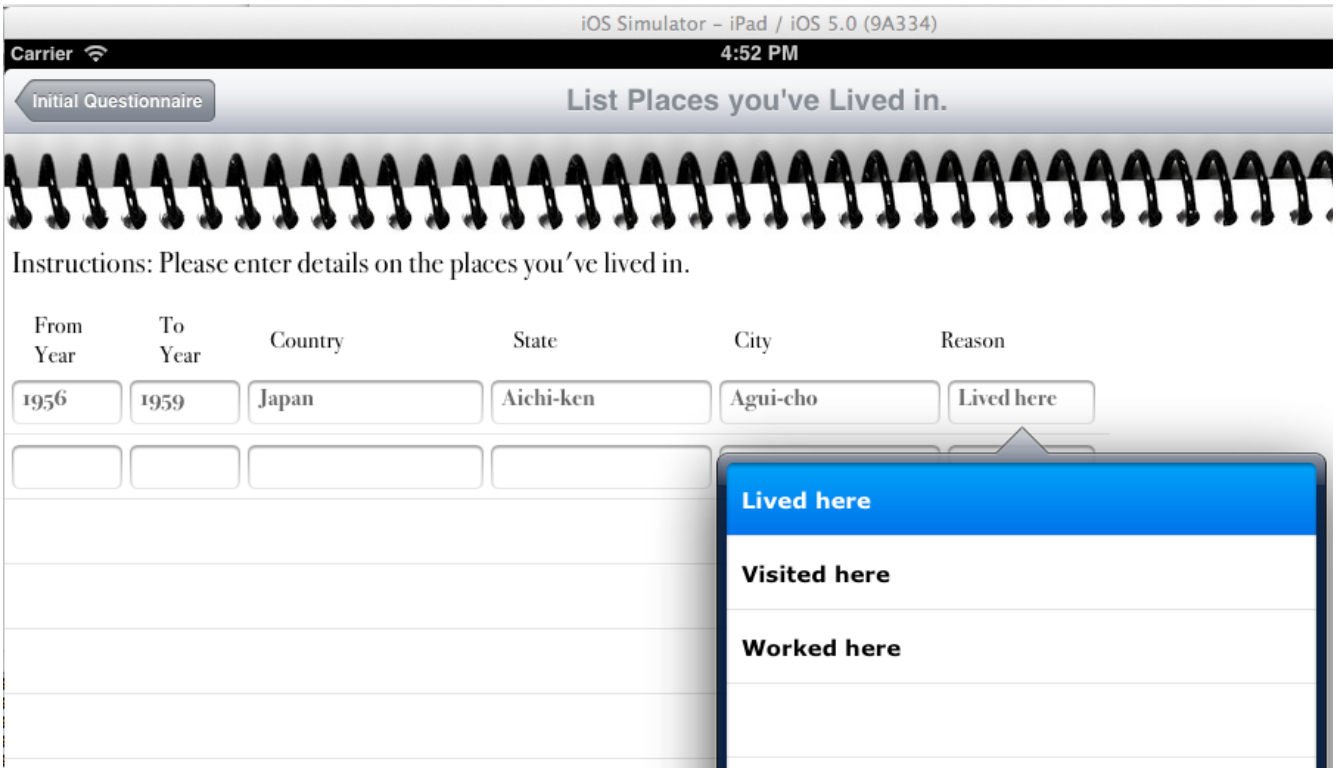


Illustration 13: List Places you've Lived in.

Please notice the drop-down list with choices[1] as to the reason the Narrator was at that location.

1 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Work Life

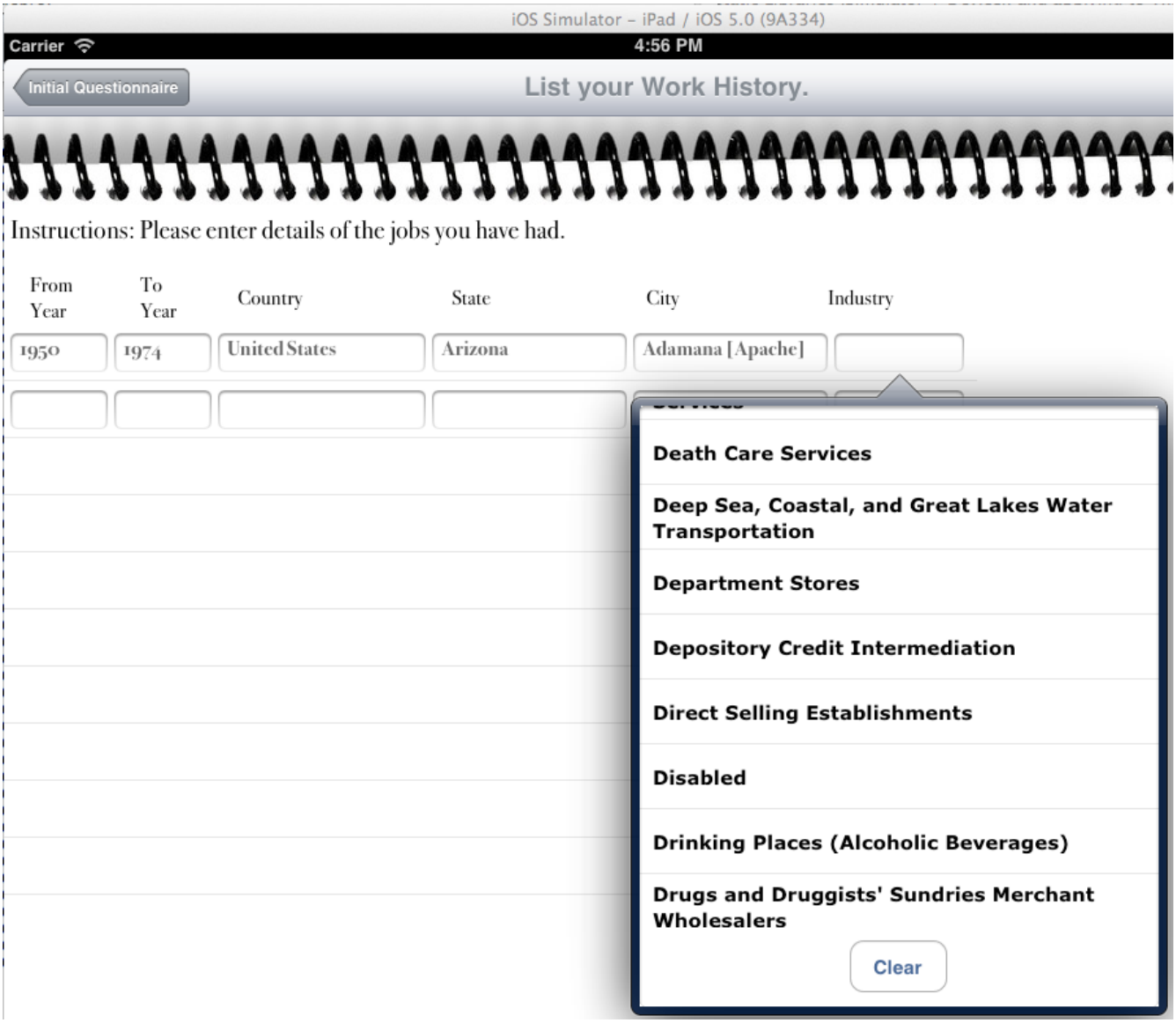


Illustration 14: List your Work History.

Please notice the drop-down list of industries[2] and job types to choose from.

2 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Military

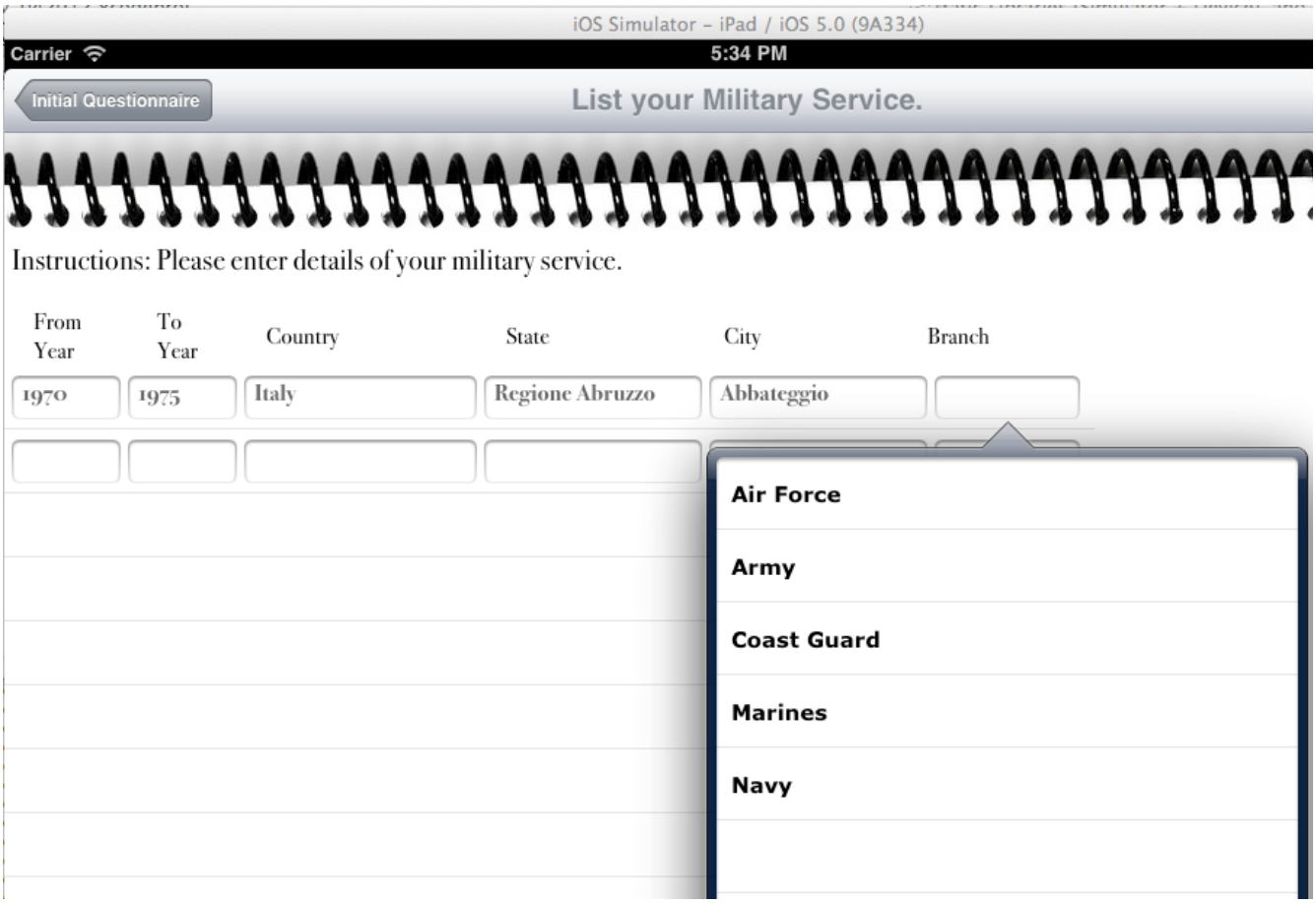


Illustration 15: List your Military Service.

Please notice the drop-down list of branches of the US military to choose from.

School

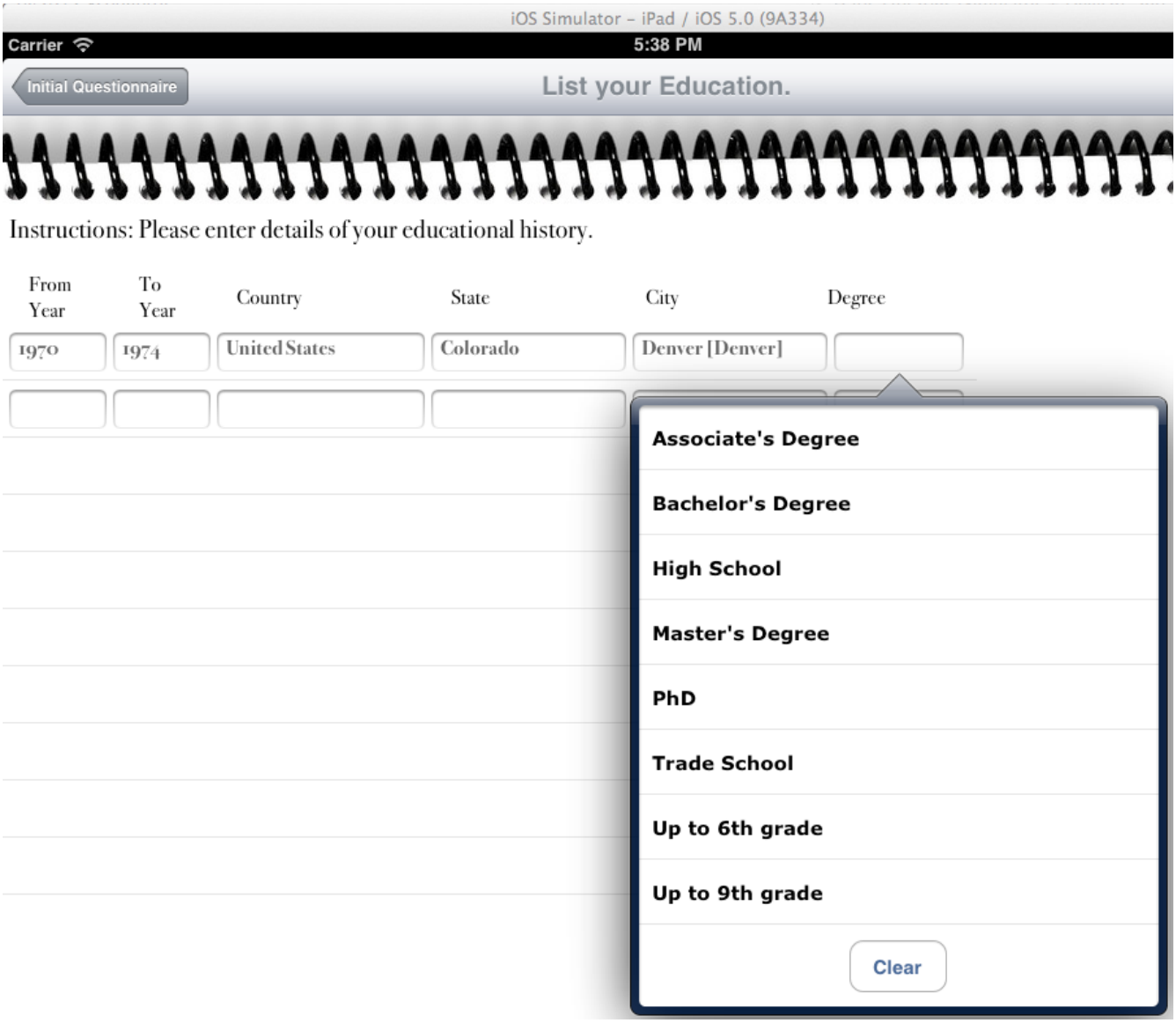


Illustration 16: List your Education.

Please notice the drop-down list of levels of educational achievement[3] the user can choose from.

3 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Religion

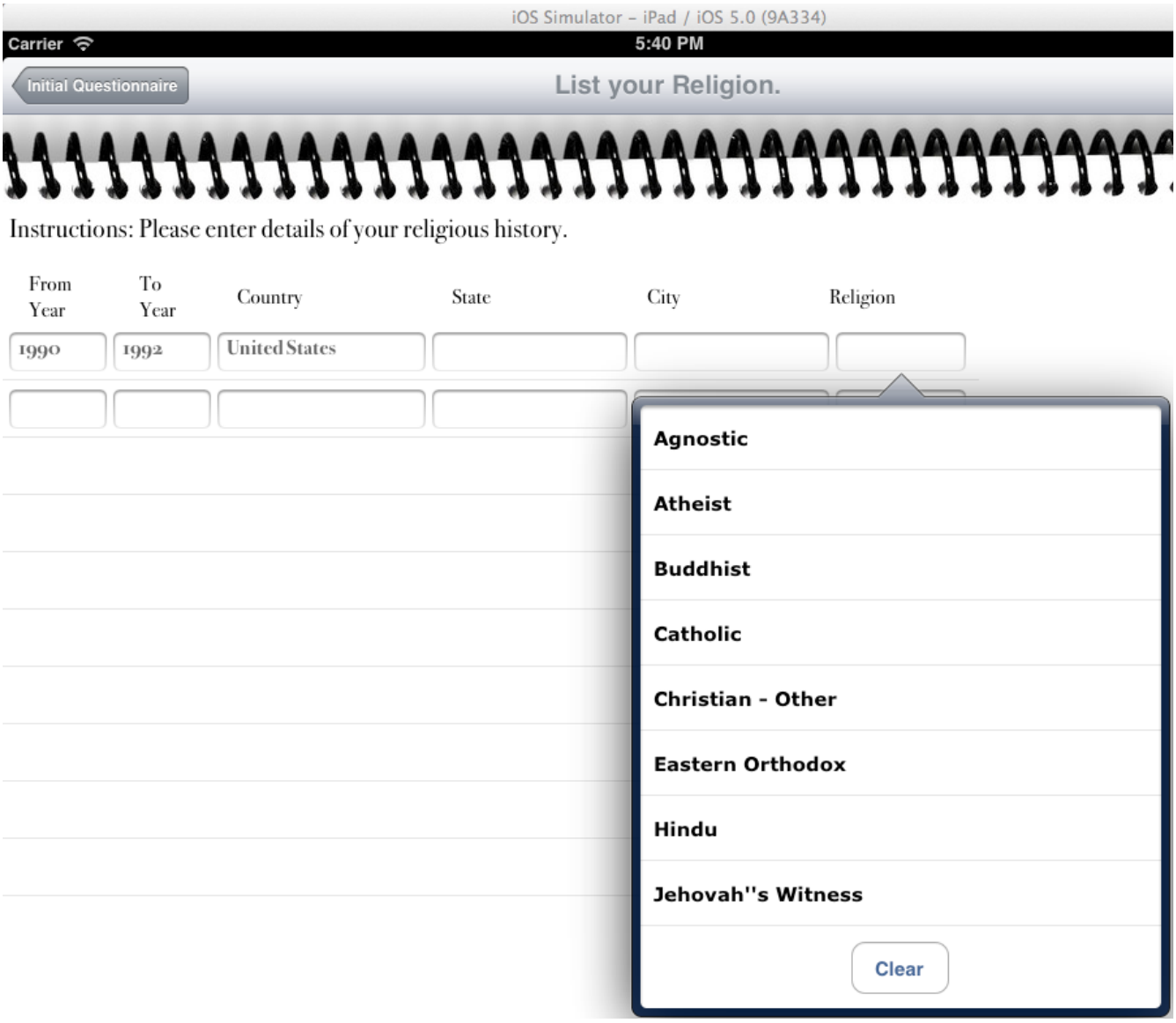


Illustration 17: List your Religion.

Please notice the drop-down list of religions[4] the user can choose from.

4 This list of choices can be customized as required.

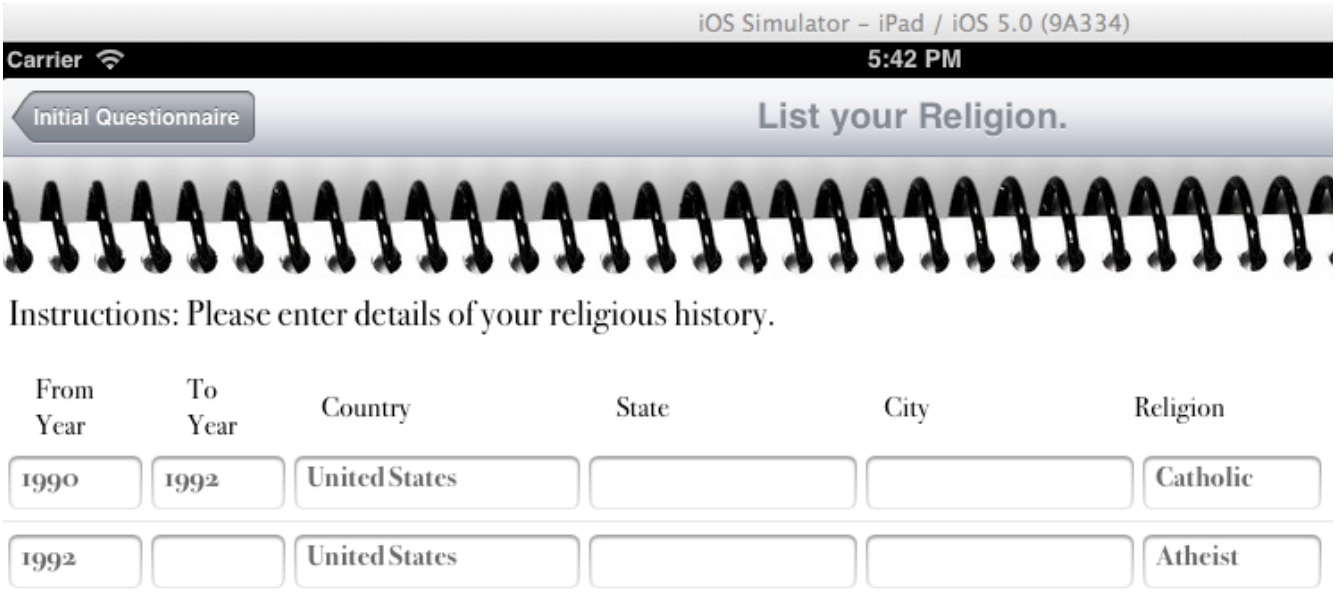


Illustration 18: Transitions in Religious Affiliation.

Please notice that the transitions in a Narrator's life indicated by the answer to these simple questions are very important to understand what happened in the Narrator's life. For example, in the screenshot above, our sample Narrator transitioned in his religious beliefs from being a Catholic to being an Atheist.

The Rules Engine embedded in the app (more details in the Rules Engine section below) will take these transitions into account to construct relevant questions for the Narrator to answer later on.

Service

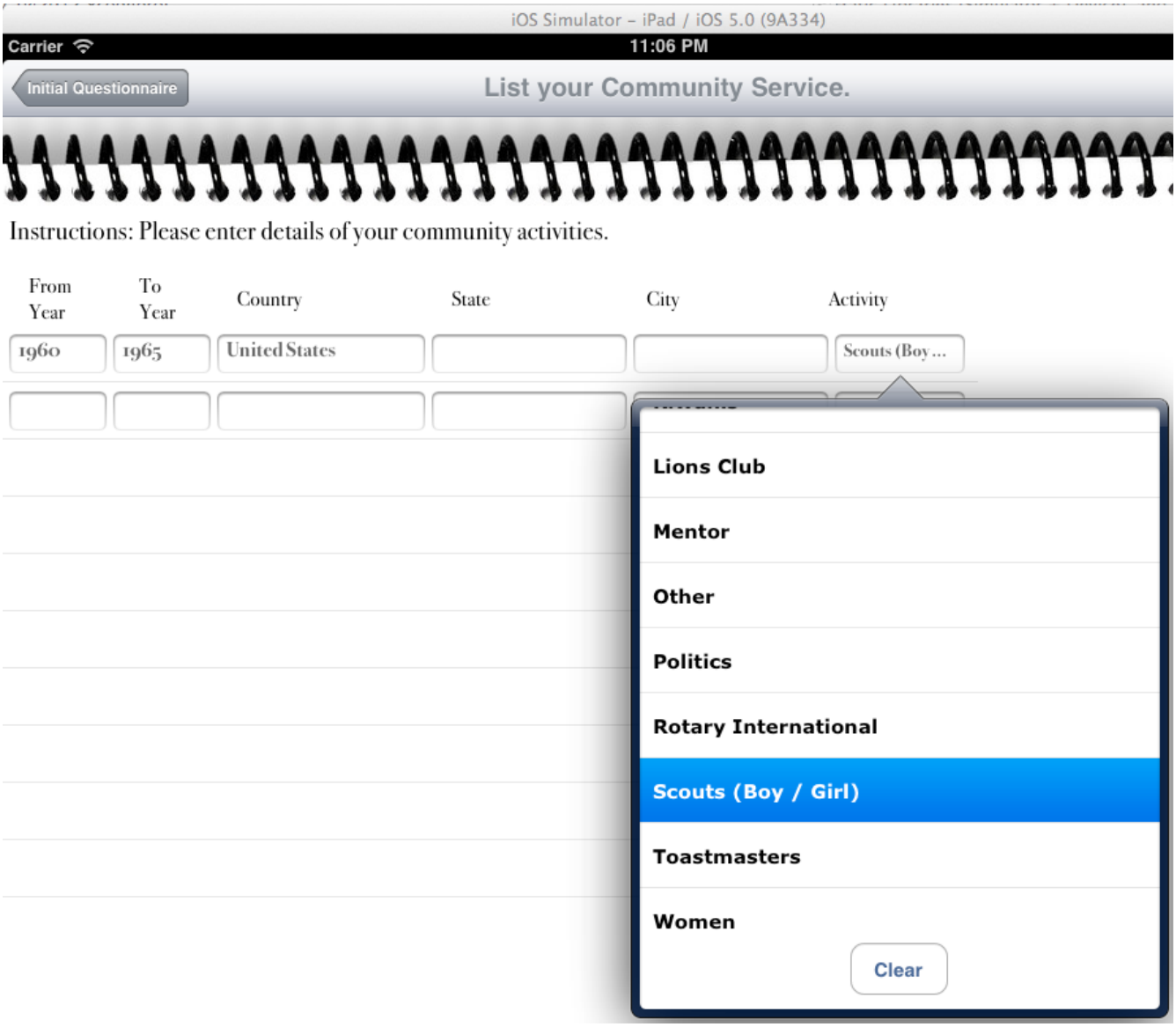


Illustration 19: List your Community Service.

Please notice the drop-down list of community service organizations and activities[5] the user can choose from.

5 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Hobbies

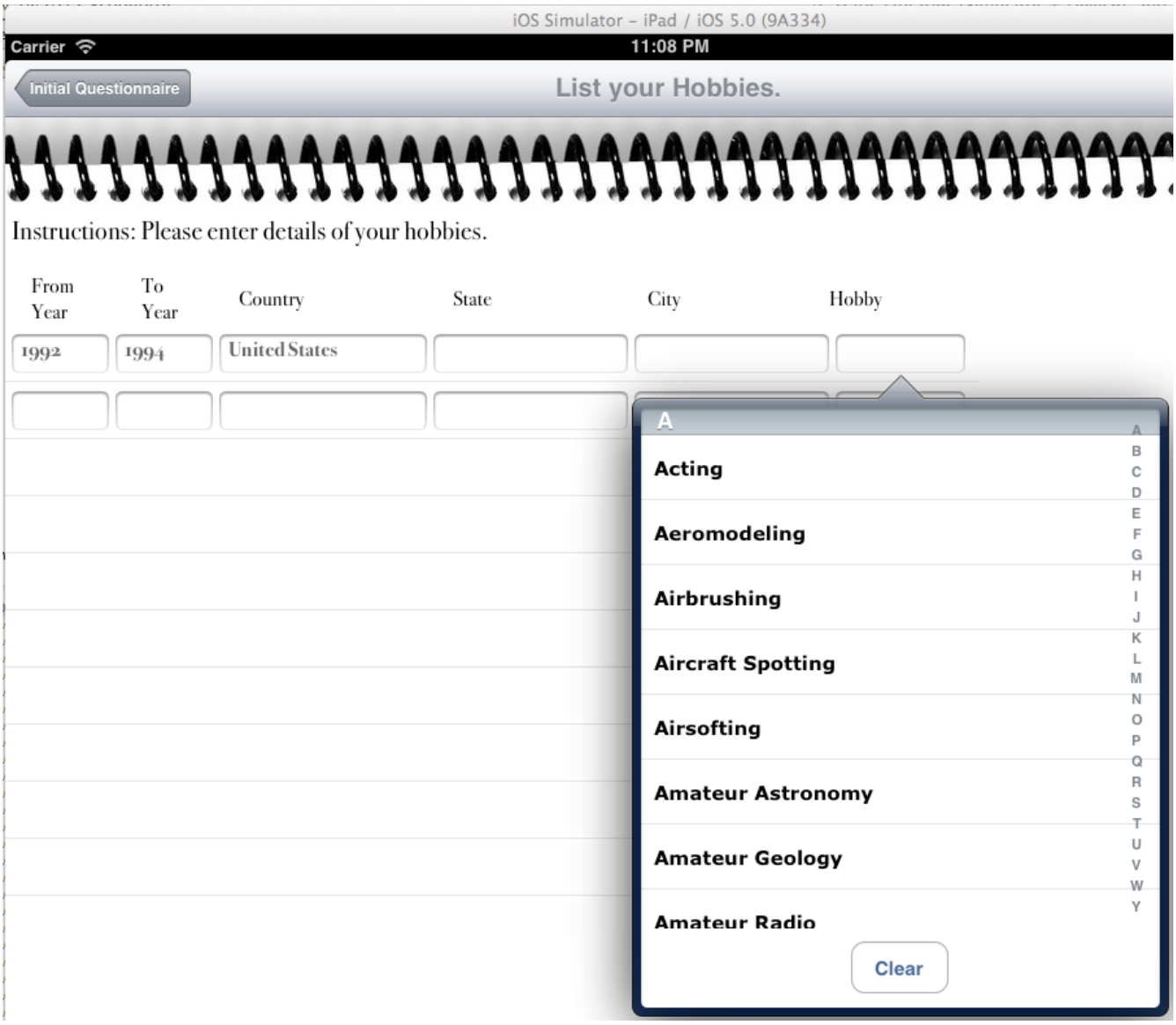


Illustration 20: List your Hobbies.

Please notice the drop-down list of hobbies[6] the user can choose from.

6 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Art

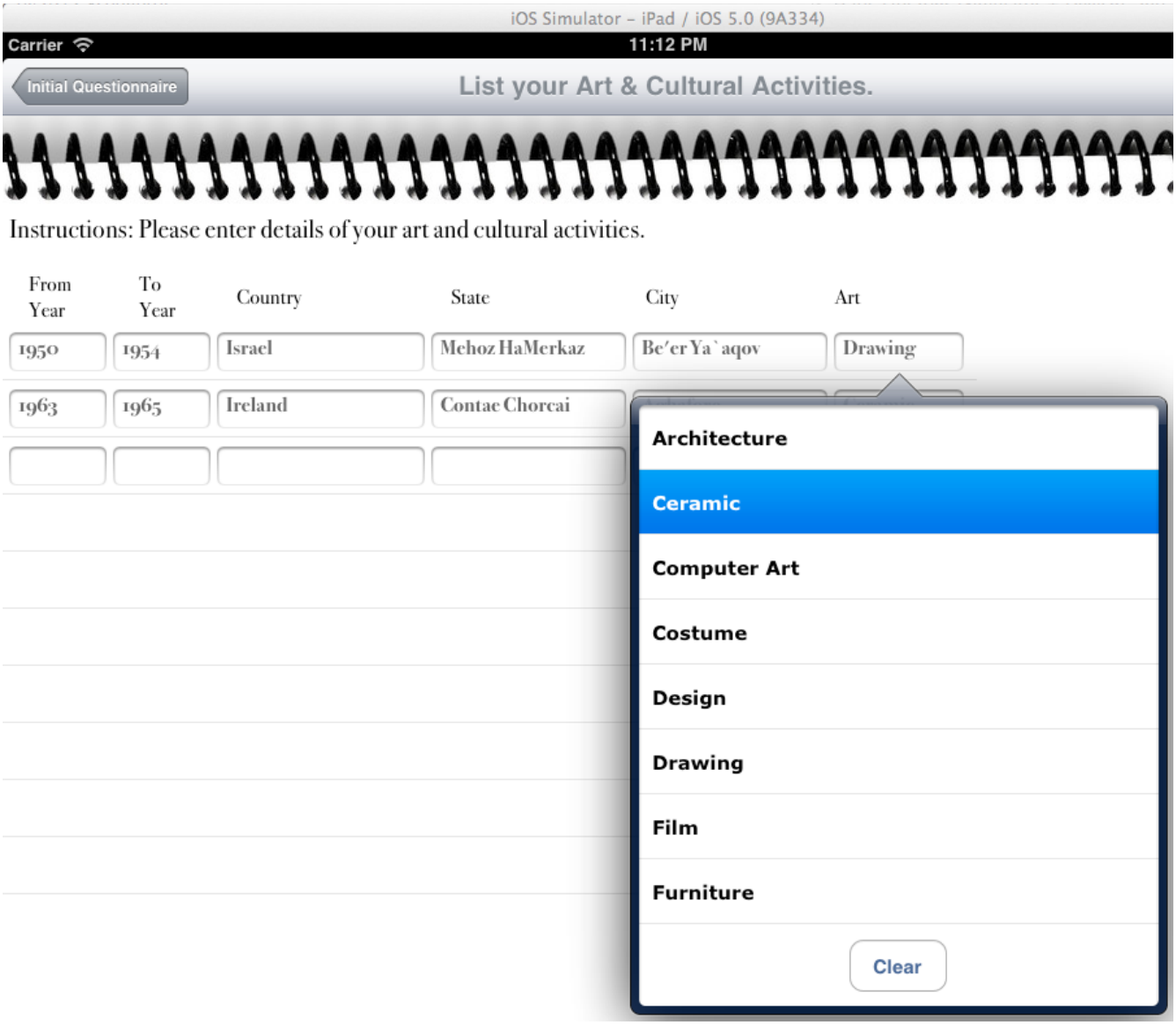


Illustration 21: List your Art & Cultural Activities.

Please notice the drop-down list of art and cultural activities[7] the user can choose from.

7 This list of choices can be customized as required.

Once Completed the Initial Questionnaire

The user can now indicate that the Initial Questionnaire is completed.

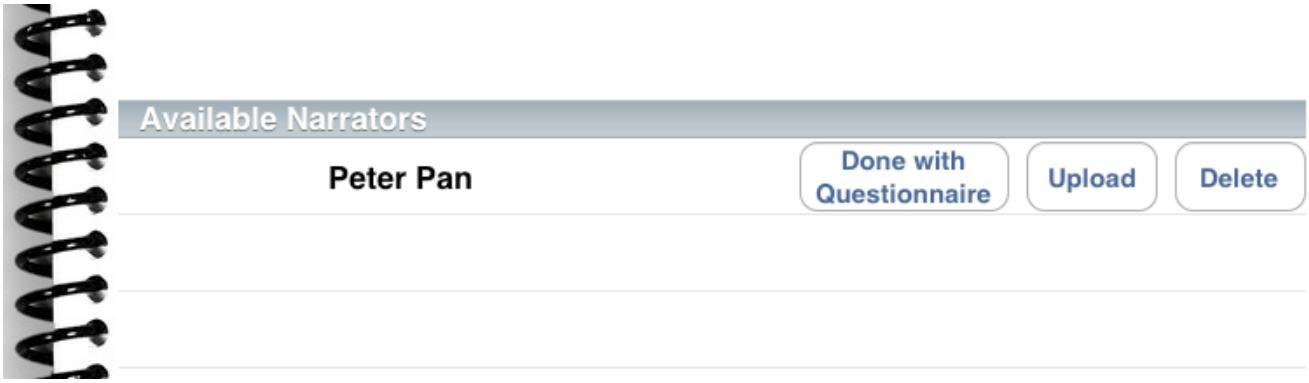
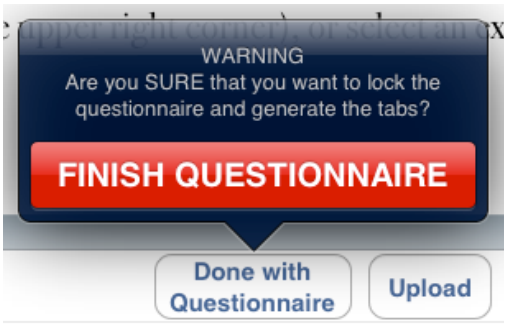


Illustration 22: List of Available Narrators.

By pressing the "Done with Questionnaire" button the user will launch the Rules Engine.


WARNING
Are you SURE that you want to lock the questionnaire and generate the tabs?
FINISH QUESTIONNAIRE
Done with Questionnaire
Upload

After the user provides answers to as many of those questions as possible the app will process those answers through its Rules Engine. Our Rules Engine is designed to provide highly personalized and relevant historical and social context to the raw data points provided by user.

Rules Engine

The Rules Engine uses the answers to the questions to generate " Memory Triggers" to get the Narrator talking about specific people, places, events or stories of her life.

For example, if the user answered that the Narrator is female and was born in the US in 1910, the Rules Engine will then pre-populate the rest of the Narrator's record with memory triggers such as:

My family's life during World War I.
The Spanish Flu Pandemic.
My life during Prohibition.
My life during the Great Depression.
The New Deal under FDR.
Living through the Dust Bowl.
My experiences during WW II.
Life after returning from WW II.
Life during the Korean War.
The Civil Rights Era.
Impact of Vietnam War on my life.
My take on the 60's and Hippies.

Where was I when JFK was killed?
Where was I when Robert Kennedy was killed?
Where was I when Martin Luther King was killed?

Technical Note
We have developed a proprietary set of rules to analyze the answers to simple questions and then to combine that with historical information. These rules can be customized as required.

The user then proceeds to add specific information about the People, Places, Events, and Stories of the Narrator's life. The information is then presented in a very easy to use, visually-intensive layout, below.

The user can also record audio, video, and take pictures from inside the app using the iPad's built-in cameras and microphone.

People Tab

This tab presents a table of all the people in the Narrator's life.

The user can take pictures of each individual listed (see Capturing Audio / Photo / Video below) and a thumbnail of each picture will appear on the left side of the listing.

This simple list format was chosen to allow users to visually see and remember the people in their life. This approach is very useful when dealing with adults suffering from Alzheimer's.

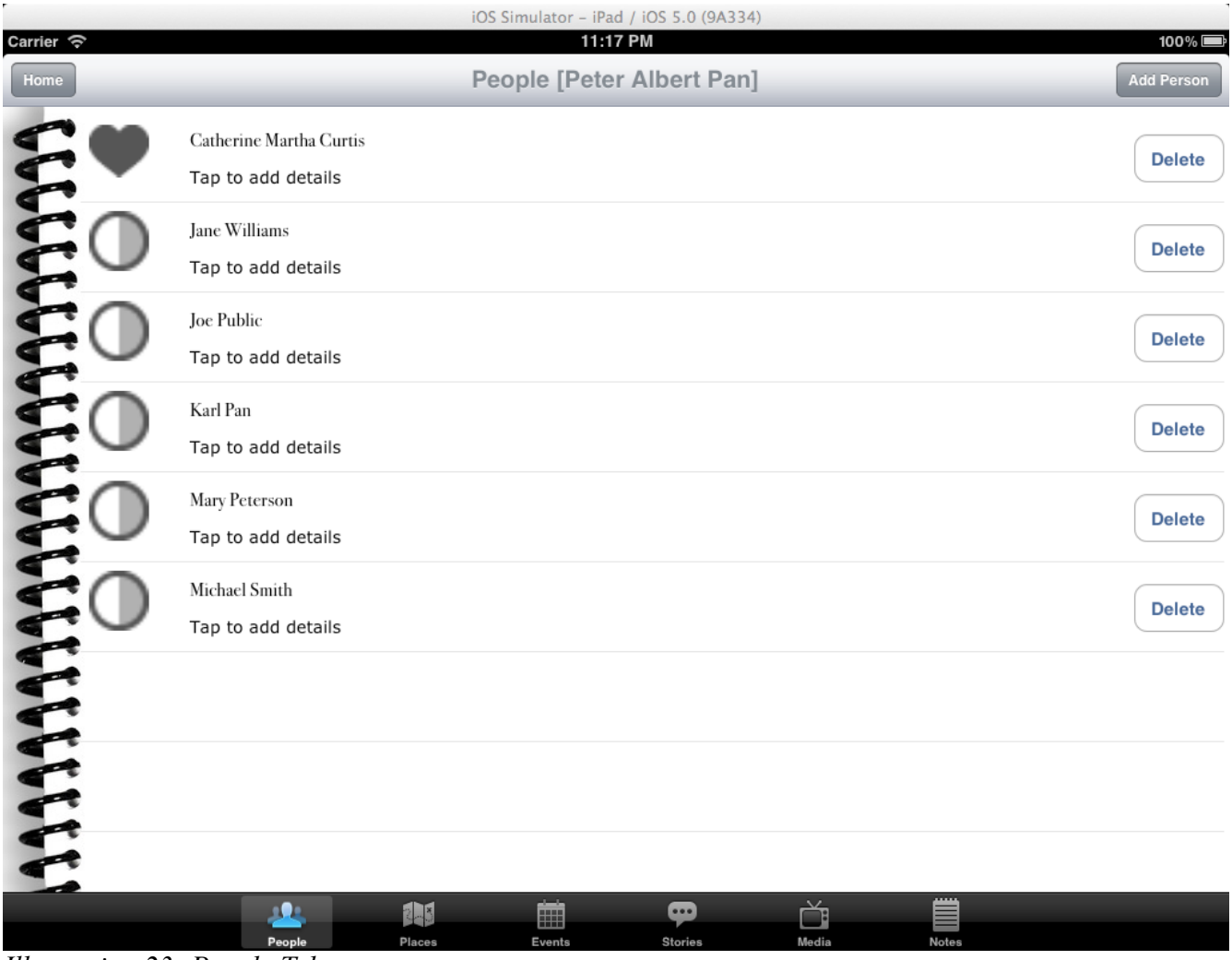


Illustration 23: People Tab.

Please notice that the names of individuals listed on the “People” tab above match the names entered by the user during the Initial Questionnaire.

Places Tab

This tab presents a table of all the places in the Narrator's life.

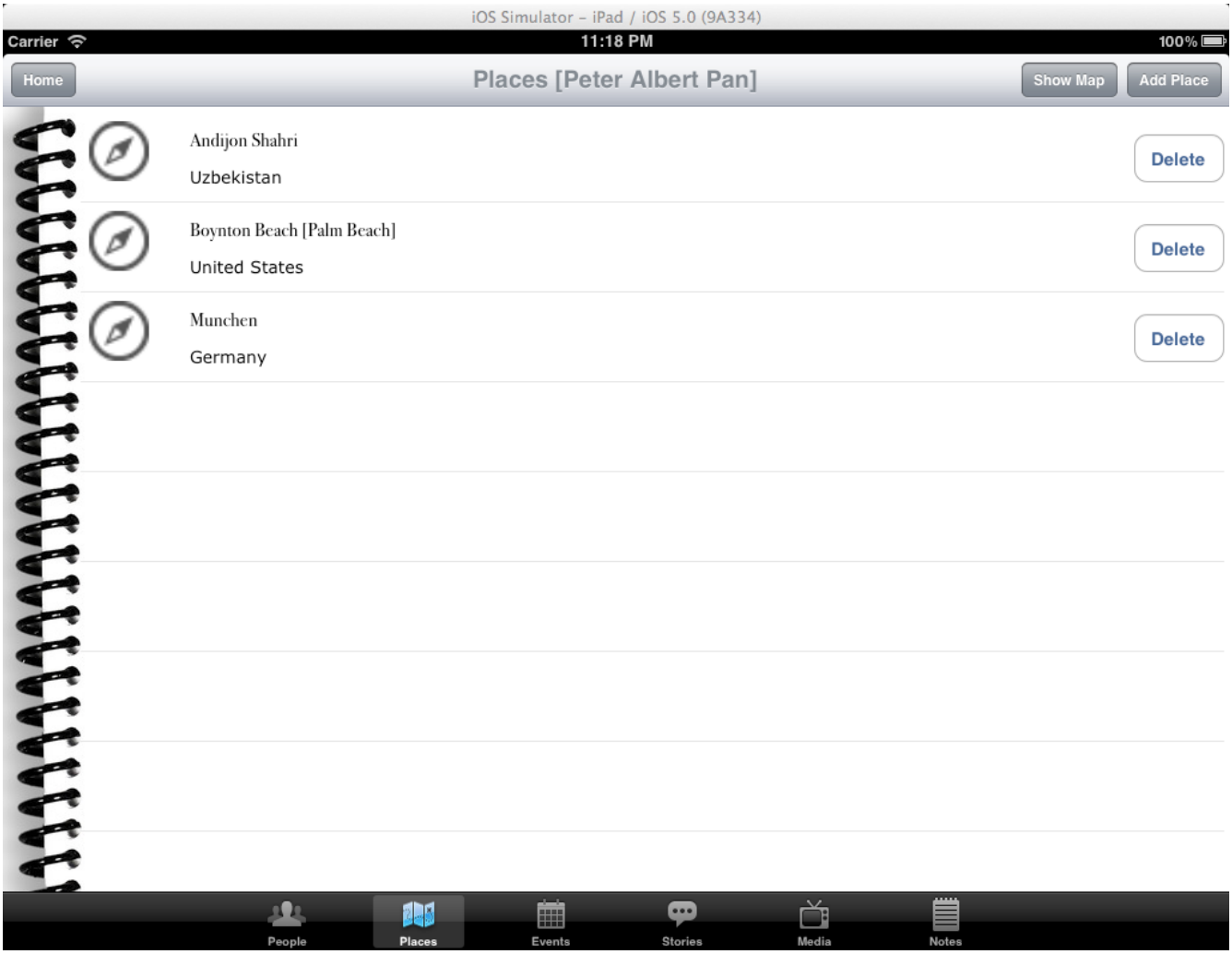


Illustration 24: Places Tab.

Please notice that the names of places listed on the “Places” tab above match the places entered by the user during the Initial Questionnaire.

Mapping Engine

The app has an integrated Mapping Engine that, combined with a taxonomy of over 02.9 million locations, allows the user to visualize the location of any place in the world, below.

Press the “Show Map” button on the upper right corner of the “Places” tab to see the map shown below.

Illustration 25: Map in Places Tab.

Please notice that ***the app does NOT use Google Maps or any other mapping website service***. The app has a built-in Mapping Engine running locally that does not need neither a WiFi nor a cellular connection.

The app allows user to zoom up to planet-wide view, and then zoom down to the county level.

Events Tab

This tab presents a table of all the events in the Narrator's life.

The events are listed in chronological order, ascending. This simple format allows user to visually remember their life events.

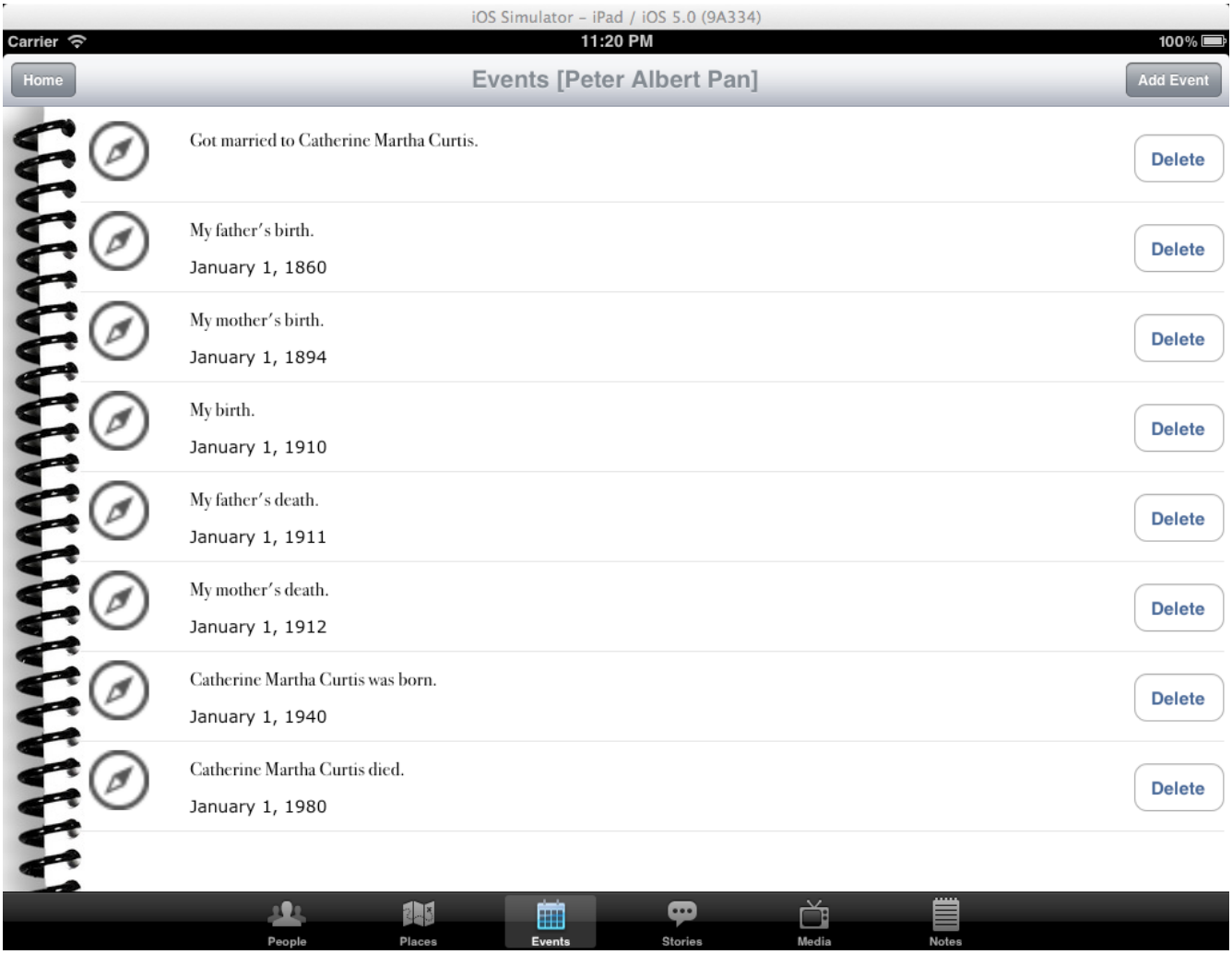


Illustration 26: Events Tab.

Please notice that the events listed on the “Events” tab above match the life events entered by the user during the Initial Questionnaire.

Stories Tab

This tab presents a table of all the stories about the Narrator's life.

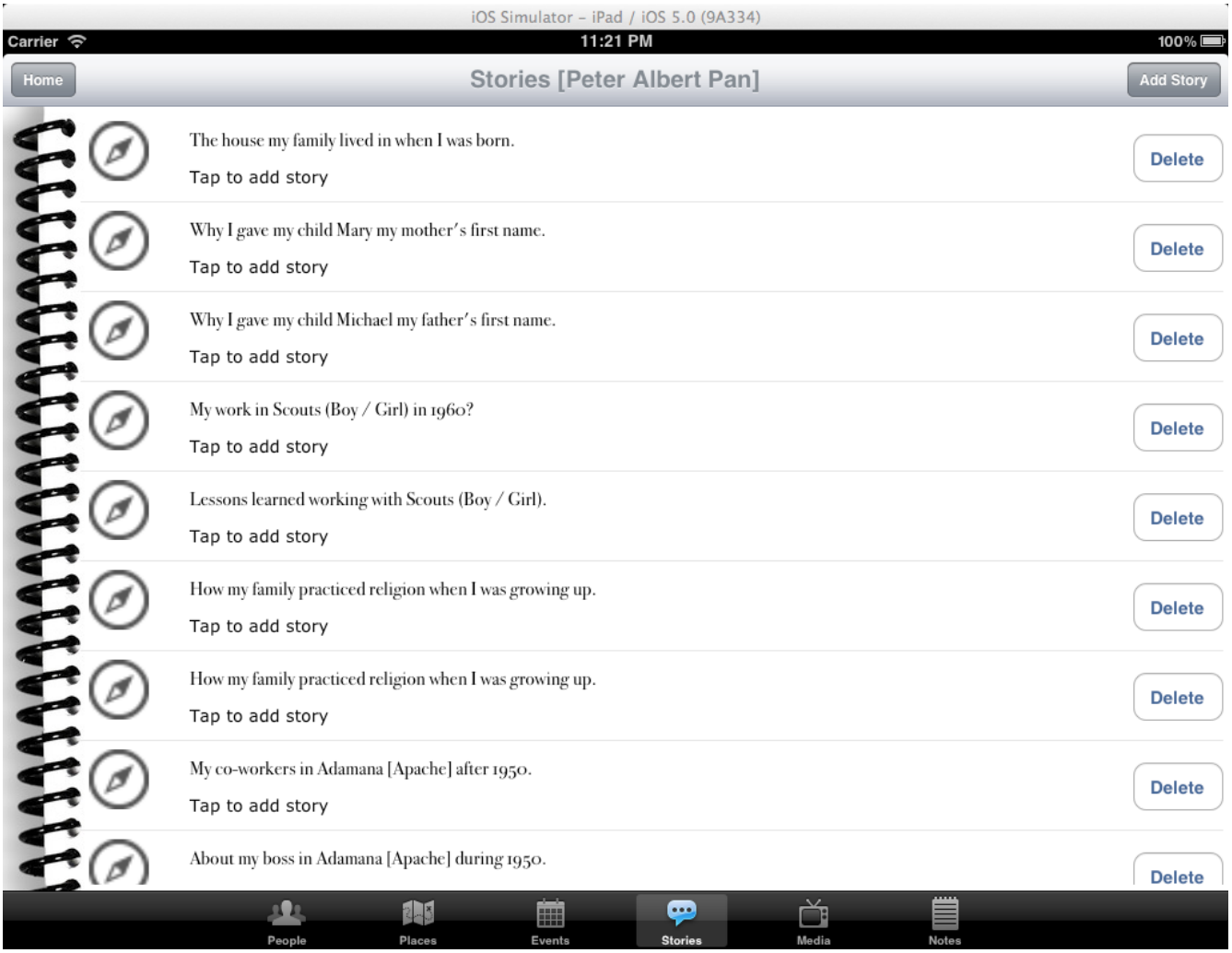


Illustration 27: Stories Tab.

Please notice that the stories listed on the "Stories" tab above are created based on the answers to the Initial Questionnaire.

The Rules Engine will pre-populate this tab with many placeholders for common stories ("tell us about your Mom, your Dad"). Also included are stories driven by specific answers to the Initial Questionnaire, such as: "why is your child named the same as your father; your work experience at Company A in town B; etc."

Media Tab

This tab presents a table of all the media files (audio, photo or video) in the Narrator's life.

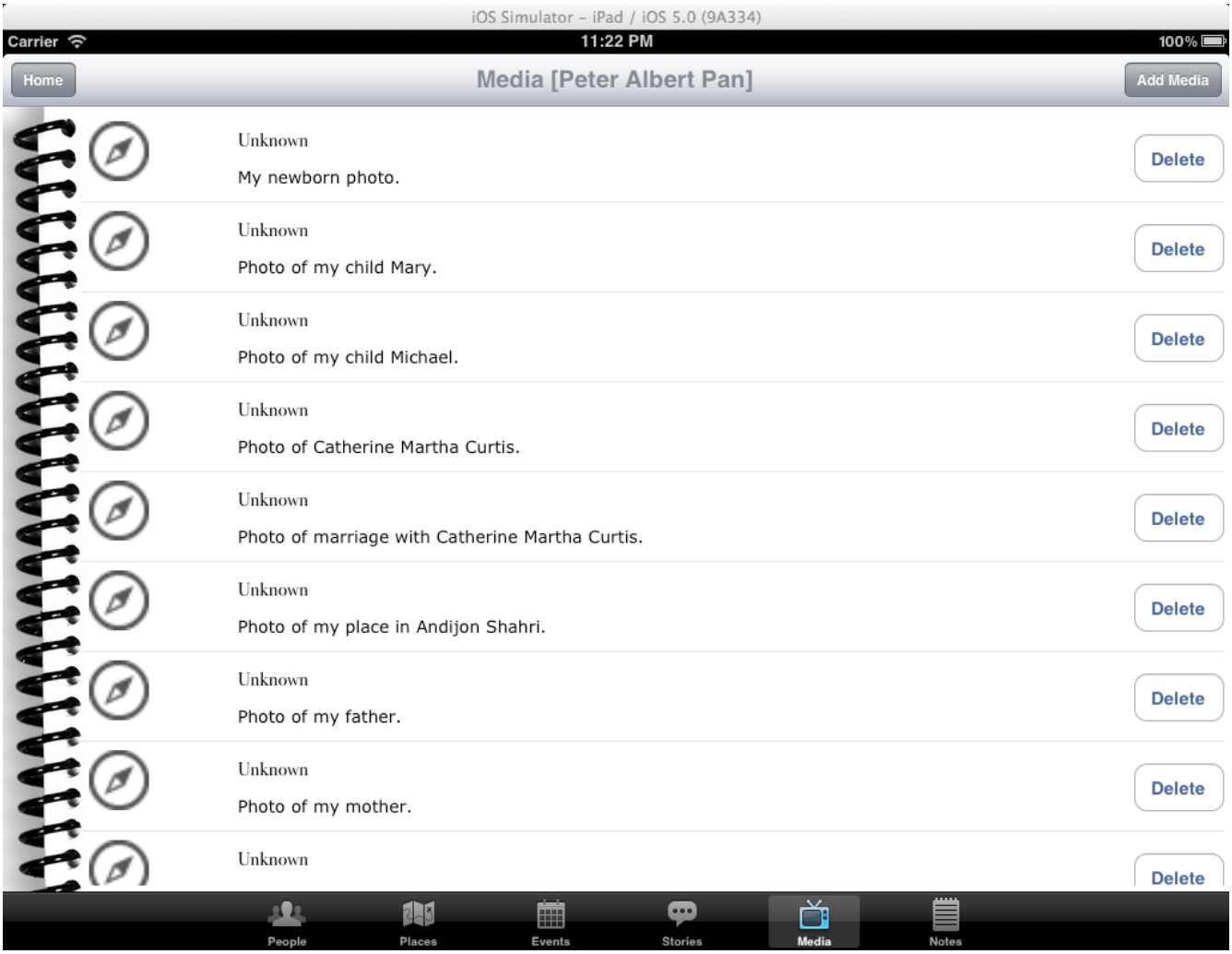


Illustration 28: Media Tab.

Please notice that the placeholders for media listed on the “Media” tab above match the people and events defined in the Initial Questionnaire.

The app can capture multimedia files from inside the app itself, such as:
* audio recordings
* photos
* videos

Notes Tab

This tab presents a table of all the notes in the Narrator's life.

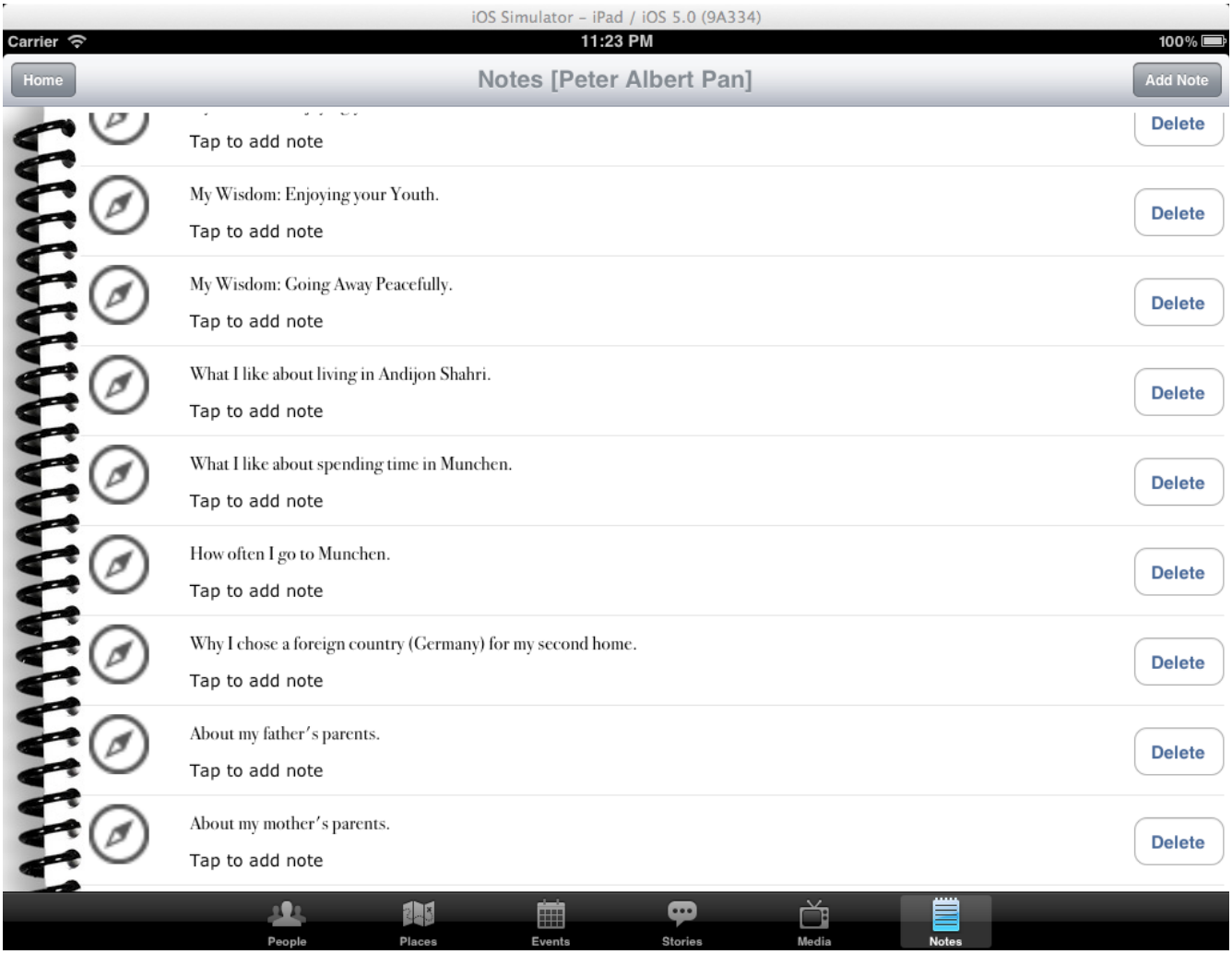


Illustration 29: Notes Tab.

Please notice that the placeholders listed on the "Notes" tab above are derived from the user's answers to the Initial Questionnaire.

The Notes tab can also be used to store other types of information the Narrator wants to store for later use. Such as: recipes, knitting instructions, gift ideas, etc.

Details for Each Item

The user can enter a lot of details for each item in the tabs defined above.

Details of a Person

Illustration 30: Details of a Person.

Details of a Place

Illustration 31: Details of a Place.

Details of an Event

Illustration 32: Details of an Event.

Details of a Story

Illustration 33: Details of a Story.

Details of a Media Item

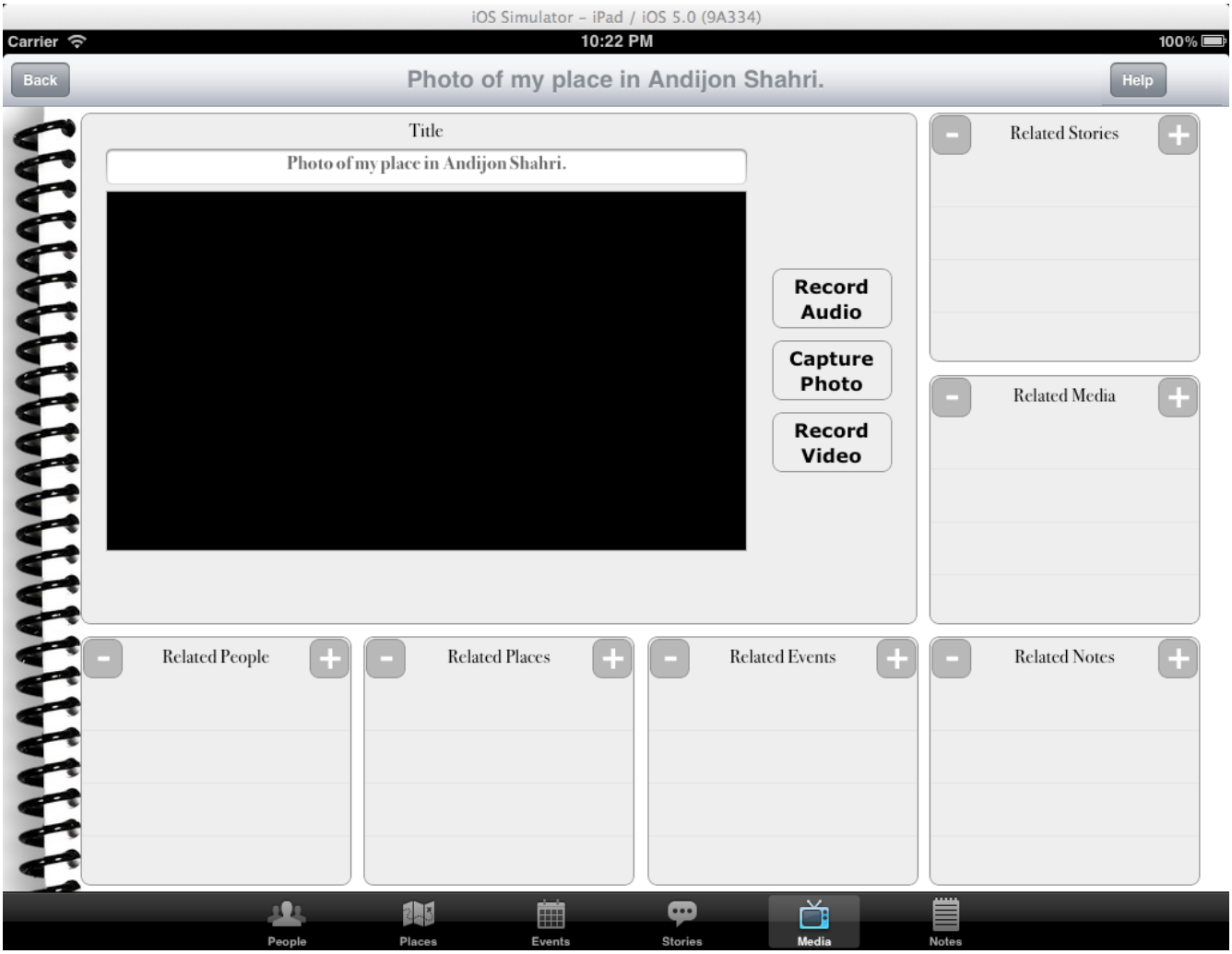


Illustration 34: Details of a Media Item.

Details of a Note

Illustration 35: Details of a Note.

Related Items

Please notice that for each item in the tabs above there are six boxes (below and to the right) that offer a type of cross-reference to other tabs in the application.

Connection	Details
Related People	Individual(s) related to this item.
Related Places	Place related to this item.
Related Events	Event(s) related to this item.
Related Notes	Note(s) related to this item.
Related Media	Media files related to this item.
Related Stories	Story(ies) related to this item.

Table 4: Related Items and Connections.

Think of these “Related Items” tables as a navigation system where every record in the Narrator's database is connected with other records. This mechanism allows for navigating a Narrator's memoirs from multiple axis, providing multiple “views” into a Narrator's life.

The image below shows an example of cross-linking a Place (Munich, in this case) with a list of stories populated by the items under the “Stories” tab.

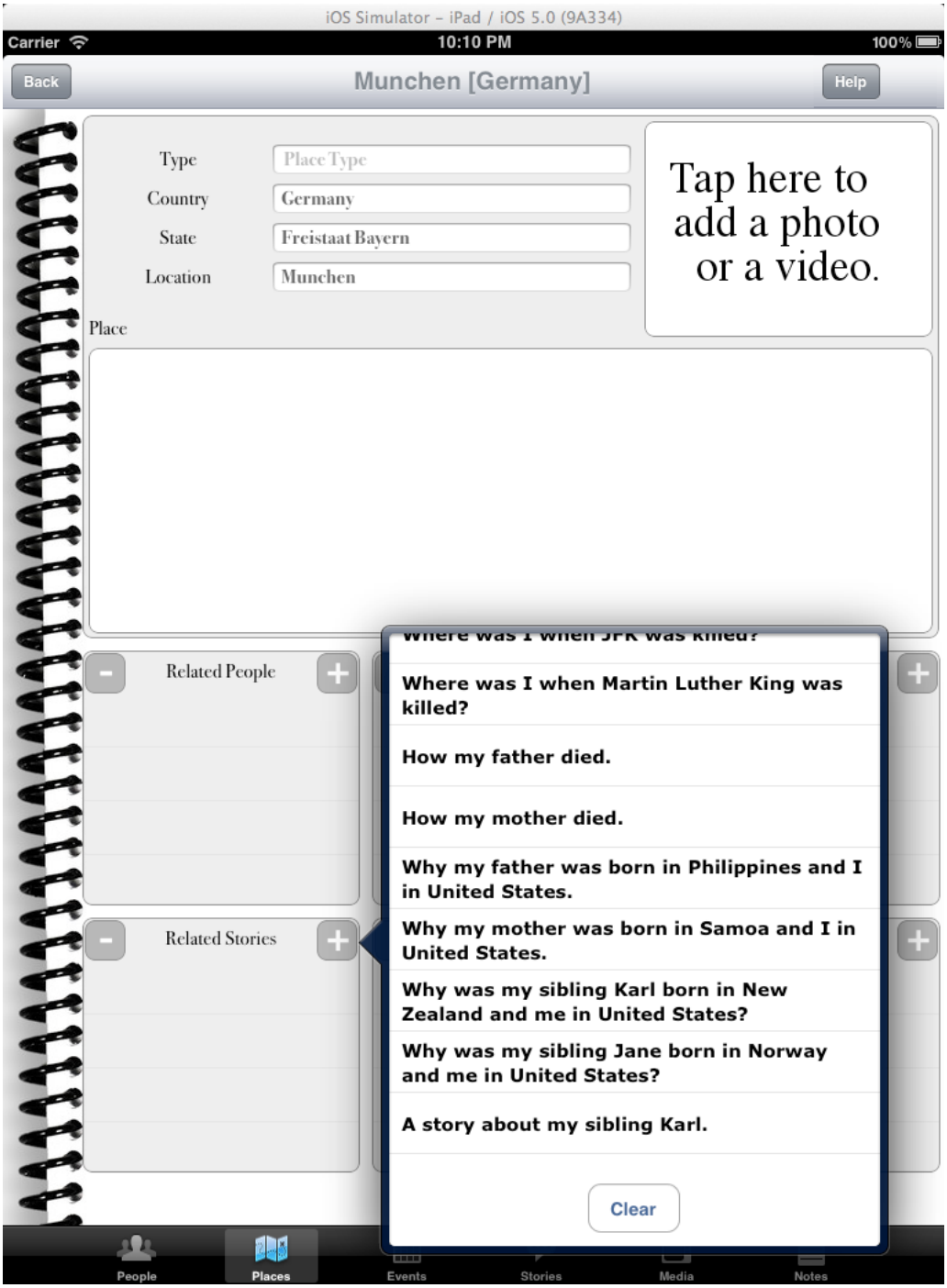


Illustration 36: Populating a Related Item Entry.

Capturing Audio / Photo / Video

Each item in the tabs also allows the user to record audio, take a photo, or record a video.

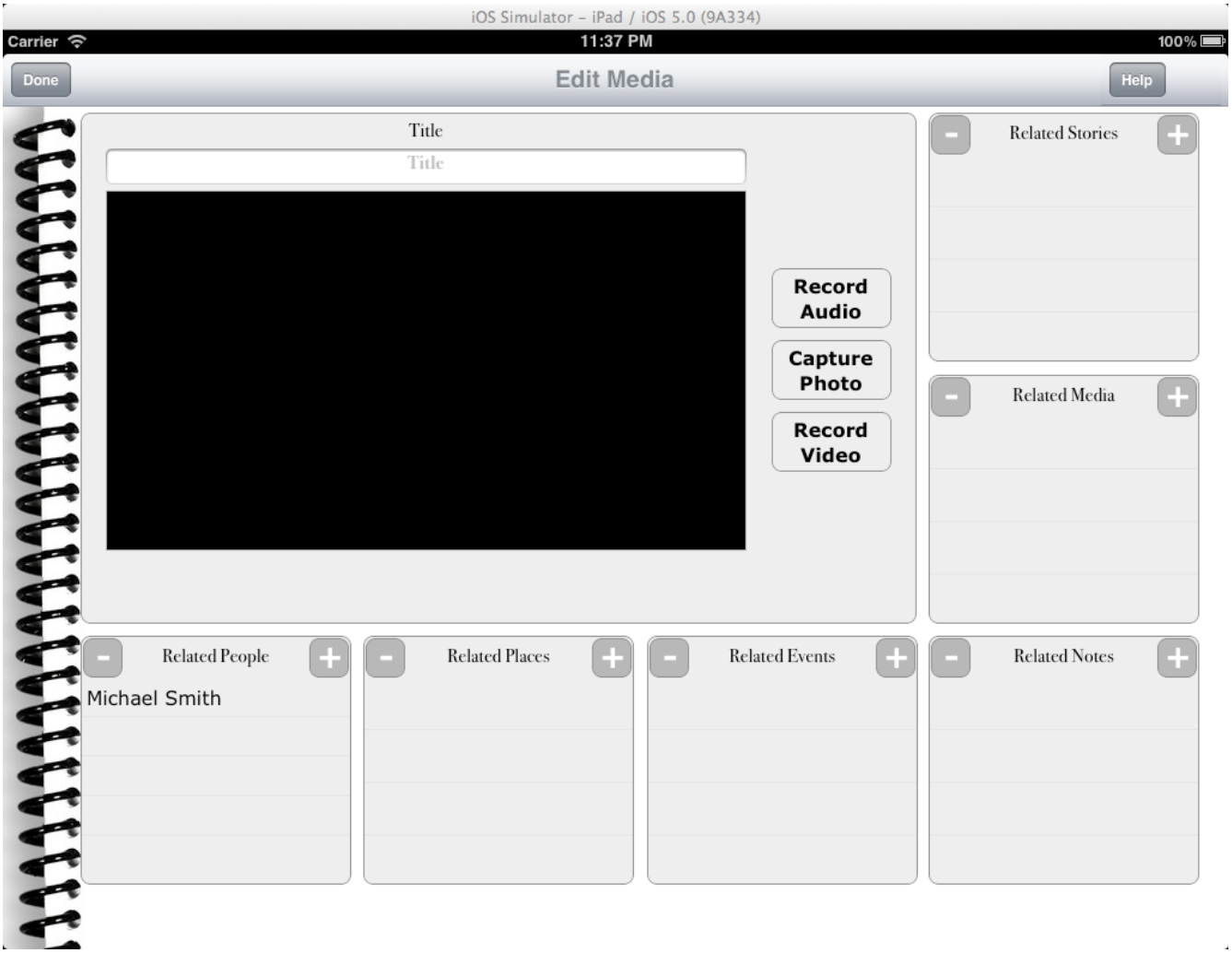


Illustration 37: Capturing Media.

Notice how in this case the app automatically populates the “related item” table (in this case, this particular media element “is related to a person” named “Michael Smith”.

The app is designed to limit the length of each audio and video recording to minimize the resulting files' size.

Upload Narrator's Information

Once the user starts collecting information and files from a Narrator he may want to share those files with a broader audience. The user may also want to back up the files on a server in case something happens to the iPad.

The LifeVenture.me app can upload all the content it has captured onto a remote server using FTP. To do that the user needs to configure the account details needed to perform the upload to the remote server.

Illustration 38: Transfer Files Menu.

The user can configure multiple different servers where she wants to upload all her data to.

Technical Note
The app creates a separate directory for each Narrator inside the app's filesystem[8]. All the multimedia files (audio, photo, video) collected for each Narrator are stored in the Narrator's directory. All the information entered for a single Narrator is stored in a separate SQLite3 file in the Narrator's directory. Then, when the user uploads the Narrator's data to a remote server, the multimedia files and the SQLite3 file are all uploaded.
This approach allows the app to handle multiple Narrators at the same time, while keeping each individual Narrator's information safely compartmentalized.

8 iOS-based devices allow apps to have a filesystem inside each app.

The user needs to configure the account details (server name; server's URL; username; and password) for each server she wants to upload data to.

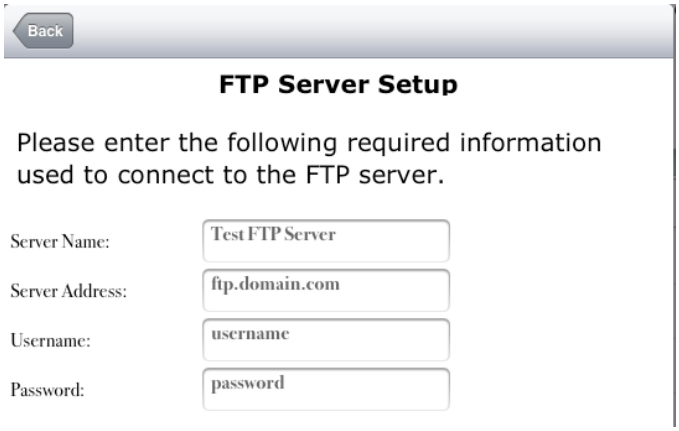


Illustration 39: Configure FTP Server Account.

Once the account(s) have been configured, the user selects a particular server to upload data to and the app will perform the data upload.

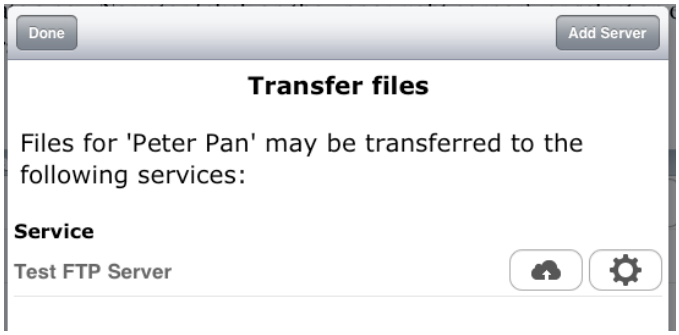


Illustration 40: Configured FTP Server.

Note: the app can be modified to upload content using different data formats, such as JSON.

Output Options

In a future release the app will be able to generate an output file based on the data entered thus far. Specifically, we are working on the following options.

PDF Book Generation

The app will create a PDF file on the device, and the user will be able to email the file from the iPad itself.

Please note that the PDF file will not include neither audio nor video files.

Ebook Generation

The LifeVenture.me Community Server will allow the user to create an ebook for download.

Once the user uploads a Narrator's data (audio, photos, videos, text) to the server the ebook will be generated server-side. The ebook (using industry-standard formats) will contain all the information and files captured by the iPad in a format suitable for viewing both on tablets as well as desktop computers.

LifeVenture.me Community Server

We're currently building a server that will provide additional features and capabilities to complement the LifeVenture.me app.

Planned Features

These are some of the features we're working to implement on the first release:

Server Feature	Details
Integration with genealogy websites	FamilySearch first, then Geni. These sites offer simple web APIs already.
Facebook integration	Full social-like capabilities.
Web-based Initial Questionnaire	Compile a user's entire history on-line, without using an iPad at all.
ebook generation	See Ebook Generation section above.
Upload videos to YouTube	Push Narrator's videos[9] to YouTube for a wider audience.
Speech to text transcoding	Convert each audio file into a text file. Index the content, create metadata. This will make this Narrator's file easily discoverable during the search process by the site's users.
Video to text transcoding	Extract the audio track of each video file into a separate audio file. Then process the audio file as described above.

Table 5: Planned LifeVenture.me Community Server Features.

9 Only with Narrator's explicit approval.

Appendix - Sample Narrator Data

Add Narrator

Peter Albert Pan
Nickname: Pete
Year Birth: 1910
FamilySearch ID: 9X7LP
Gender: M

Born: US - FL - Boynton Beach
Live now: Uzbekistan - Andijon Viloyati - Andijon Shahri
Second home: Germany - Freistaat Bayern - Munchen

- - Parents - -

Michael Peter Smith
Philippines
Born 1860
Died 1911

Mary Jane Peterson
Samoa
Born 1894
Died 1912

- - Children - -

Michael David Pan
Netherlands
Gender M
Born 1926
Died 1927

Mary Louise Kelly
Lebanon
Gender F
Born 1928
Not dead - alive

- - Siblings - -

Jane Caroline Williams
Norway
Gender F
1908 - 1990

Karl Michael Pan
New Zealand
Gender M
1912 - 1914

- - Spouse - -

Catherine Martha Curtis
Jamaica
Gender F
1940 - 1980

- - Art - - -

1950 - 1954
Israel - Mehoz HaMerkaz - Be'er Ya`aqov
Drawing

1963 - 1965
Ireland - Contae Chorcai - Aghafore
Ceramic

- - Friends - -

Joe Q Public
Hungary
Gender: M
1940 - 1990

- - Places - -

1956-1959
Japan - Aichi-ken - Agui-cho

Lived there

- - Military - -

1970-1975
Italy - Regione Abruzzo - Abbateggio
Marines

- - Work - -

1950-1974
US - Arizona - Adamana
Department Stores

- - Education - -

1970-1974
US - Colorado - Denver
Bachelor's

- - Religion - -
1990-1992
US
Catholic

1992-
US
Atheist

- - Hobbies - -
1992-1994
US
Aeromodeling

- - Community Service - -
1960-1965
US
Scouts